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SHORT STORY COLLECTION

WINWARD PRESCOTT

brary

OTT

CHAS. E. LAURIAT CO.
IMPORTERS & BOOKSELLERS
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WAR STORIES

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JANUARY 27, 1933

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To the authors of these stories, who
by their writings
have given us all a deeper signifi-
cance of war in its many phases,
this book is dedicated

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PREFACE

NOT so very long ago a good many people measured the value of medicine by the simple standard of taste; the worse the taste, the better the medicine. By reversing this logic, they came to the conclusion that any medicine which happened to be agreeable could be of no value at all. Fortunately the medical profession has done away with this idea, with the result that pills and powders are now made as pleasant to take as possible.

In the teaching of English, the same unfortunate idea has persisted. Teachers decry any possible value in a subject which is to be merely enjoyed. This seems to be true especially in the study of the Short Story. With but a few exceptions, the average short story text contains only those narratives of which both the author and the subject matter are dead. This fact is much to be deplored. The average student is interested only in facts of to-day and to-morrow. He is concerned about the past, only in so far as it presents him with terms of solution for the present and future. The stories which deal only with past events become tiresome. Furthermore, as soon as the student leaves the classroom, he finds an entirely different type—stories full of action, and which deal in present-day ideas; stories that are alive. Short story reading is, in fact, a national pastime.

An added incentive to the short story habit has been furnished by the war. So long as events in general were normal, any modern short story, if well executed, might prove mildly interesting. But we have recently passed through the greatest possible concentration of thought and emotion, because of that tremendous struggle, the world war. Everything has been thought out in terms of war; every act in life has been subordinated to war, with the result that the people of this nation have been forged

into a definite unit, which previously was not thought possible. Naturally, the literature revealing this profound reaction on people and conditions is the Short Story.

This volume of war stories, therefore, has been collected with two objects in view: to give the general reader a group of some of the best war stories in convenient form; and to supply the student with fresh and interesting material which should be just as valuable to illustrate the necessary technic of the Short Story, as the old type that for so many years has been thought essential.

The stories are American throughout; American authors, American characters, American reactions. In selecting them, the Editors have attempted to include examples which would illustrate as many different phases of war as possible. No attempt has been made to suggest any special approach to the stories, as such suggestions are usually a waste of time. The average instructor prefers to plan out his own method. However, with the inherent interest of the subject, and the different reactions depicted, there should be no difficulty in obtaining interesting and valuable points for class discussion.

The Editors wish to acknowledge gratefully, the kind permissions from authors and publishers to use the stories, for which separate mention is made. They wish to thank especially Professor James Cloyd Bowman for his invaluable aid at all times.

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War Stories

*Absent Without Leave

By Thomas Beer

I

Sergeant Cobb replaced another non-commissioned officer, suddenly commissioned, at the recruiting station on South Street, Zerbetta, Ohio, during that simmering week when the nation lurched into war. He found this unknown town far less tedious than its census rating had suggested upon his inquiry. It held, pressed between the court-house and the railroad yards, a munitions plant—the Zerbetta Tool and Machinery Works; and an entire regiment of the State National Guard was quartered about the untidy factory, patrolling the bridges for a dozen miles each way, and raising the recruiting average so that his clerk and medical corporal rather complained. Boys of all shapes peered into the doorway and studied the posters with speculative frowns. Drawling farmhands came in to talk it over with the sergeant and went away to consider. Worthy ladies leaped on him from corners of the square and requested exact shadings on the subject of military vice. He had no leisure for love or poker, and shipped, on Saturday night, twenty recruits to Columbus.

"An' half of 'em named Hoffmeister or Himmelgarten," he said to the clerk.

"Well, the whole country round here's half German,"

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the clerk yawned. "The church these Germans go to is the biggest thing in town. My girl's German—German as Pilsener. Let's go beat a brass rail some."

They invaded the largest bar of the square, and Cobb, smoking a cigar of merit, observed the flag above the court-house, made radiant every seventh minute by the search-light circling over the factory. It swayed and heaved like some curious gigantic blossom. He grew sentimental, being a brave man.

"If I was ten years younger," he muttered, "I'd get back into the line an' stay there. I wish I was a kid. I was in 'ninety-eight. But hell! I've forgot my drill an' everythin'; I dunno a platoon from a colonel, no more. I——"

"Say, sergeant,"—a National Guardsman leaned over the damp table—"how young'll you take a boy?"

"Nothin' under eighteen without parents' written consent," said Cobb with parrot promptness.

"I thought so. There's some kids been askin' me."

"Send 'em along, buddy. We're open six in the mornin' to six at night. If I was a kid," he mused, watching the flag, "I'd bust into it somehow—with or without."

"I bet," said the clerk, "there's a lot of mammas wishing it was twenty-eight 'stead of eighteen."

"Prob'ly; but if I was a kid—I'd be eighteen," Cobb declared, "no matter how my birth certificate read."

He repeated this several times, sipping beer and watching the flag. Strolling back to the office he encountered his rival, the emissary of the United States Navy, on a corner, arguing with a gentleman of distressed appearance, before a grocery store.

"I tell you," cried the collector of heroes, "it ain't going to do the boy a bit o' harm. S'posin' he does get tattooed? It ain't ever hurt me."

"Well," wavered this parent, "I'll think it over. George, he's awful young to go way from his mother an'——"

"That's right," said a female in the shadow of the grocery awning; "that's right, Misder Graham. Don't

you let Georgie go off from his mother—to git killed in this fightin'——"

She locked a door and stepped under the corner lamplight. The cones of gas burners were still pink inside the show window and her garments shed a scent suggestive of long companionship with many onions.

"Well, Mis' Obermuller," George's father asserted coldly enough, "if George was as big an' strong as your Otto I'd say yes in a minute. But——"

"Otto," she retorted, the accent very clear now, "iss not yet sefenteen, an' he stays right here at home—see? Up to eighteen he stays, see? Then if the Allies is still fightin' I gan't stop him, see? But they won't be," she chuckled.

"Look here, Mis' Obermuller," gasped Mr. Graham, "you oughtn't to say things like that! You'll get into trouble."

"What for? I ain't said nothin', have I? The Allies won't be fightin'—no. They'll of wibed Germany clear off the map, yes! An' the Star-Spangled Banner in driumph shall wafe!"

With this she turned and tramped off, her feet falling on the bricks of the square in a series of cheerful flaps. She resembled an Egyptian column as to outline and her solidity impressed Cobb. He listened to the recessional with awe.

"An' it's no wonder they walked over Belgium," he said.

"She'd ought to be locked up!" sputtered the yeoman. "Gee, this is a fierce town! Why, this ain't America!"

"Yes, 'tis!"—Mr. Graham's civic spirit was roused—"but she's a real German. Conrad Obermuller, he was all right an' his father fought in the Civil War; but Conrad, he married her down in Cincinnati. She took Otto out of high school 'cause the principal said the Kaiser'd ought to be hung. I guess I'll let George go, Mr. McCarthy, but I'd like it if you'd see he gets a nice ship where there's a good doctor. His stomach ain't very strong."

"Sure," said the naval emissary gravely and kindly;

"I'll look out for the kid. I'll write an admiral I know pretty well about him. Good-night. If you'd hit Georgie with an ax," he informed Cobb presently, "you'd have to hunt up a grindstone right after; but they're all like that—a kid's folks."

"That Dutch woman," Cobb pondered, "ought to get stuck in one of these eternment camps. I expect she's got a iron cross in her top drawer now."

Next morning he noted her as he walked from very early breakfast, laying out cabbages under the awning. She was, he thought, a formidable woman. She reminded him extraordinarily of Quartermaster Sergeant Kelly's wife, who in his sight had dragged her husband from the bar of the Continental Hotel and conducted him across all Cheyenne by an ear to the sober boundaries of Fort Russell. The soapy yellow hair and the glittering blue eyes were the same; likewise the breadth of shoulder. He shuddered, passing on, but vaguely saw a curly-headed hulking boy inside the shop. Otto, he assumed. He pitied Otto profoundly.

Business that morning was rather slack. The candidates for Flanders were to be admired more for their zeal than their physical qualities. Cobb found time to wander over to the naval branch for some professional gossip, came back somewhat dispirited and was much soothed when four lads trickled in, a little nervous and giggling a good deal. Three were mere healthy, prosperous-seeming objects; the fourth cheered the sergeant and made the slim clerk blink as he stood stiffly by the desk.

"Son," he said jovially, "it'll take a heap of grub to keep you goin'. You'll be a awful expense to the Government."

"I don't eat much," protested the applicant, very red and wriggling under his shabby suit, too small in all dimensions.

"Well, kid," Cobb assured him, "you'll get plenty. Now you boys give Henry, there, your names an' your folks' names, an' so on, he'll tell you what; an' then let's see what you look like in your birthday clothes."

He bustled off into the farther room, where the medical corporal was drowsing over a paper. "Hey, Johnson! Take a look at what the cat brought in! Nine feet long an' four feet thick."

Johnson glanced through the door and puckered his lids, appraising expertly.

"Pret-ty good! But he ain't eighteen."

"That? Why——" The morning sun against the boy's face halted his denial. "I dunno. He's not old at all. Say, big boy, how old are you?"

"Eighteen."

He flushed quaintly. A visor of red slid up from his worn shirt collar to his egg-colored curly hair. Another boy giggled sharply, then bit his mouth shut. Plainly this was a lie, but Sergeant Cobb had no interest in the matter beyond amusement.

"Well, you ought to know, bud."

He saw a superb pair of legs for all purposes military, and very proper arms, one of which he pinched as the boys shuffled warily into the examining chamber. Army regulations require a complete survey at this point of a recruit's progress, a prelude to the more thorough inspection at the recruiting depot, and Cobb was used to manifold revelations on this removal of civilian dress—a failure of shoulders to support a padded promise, legs that arch wildly, tragedies of design. The phrase "magnificent specimen of manhood" had no meaning for him. He watched the three lesser prizes, hopping solemnly, naked, on one foot about the oilcloth, in series; and leaned on the door, waiting for the last exhibit. The large lad sat nursing a knee under his discarded peg-hung breeches, awkward and still flushed.

"Now you," said Cobb, "let's see if you've got busted arches."

The condition of the left arch was never demonstrated to the recruiting sergeant. Just at the completion of the first circle the door panels heaved against his back, the door opened far enough to admit a section of black skirt before he jammed it shut again.

"Otto," yelped Mrs. Obermuller, "you come right on straight home from there! You hear me?"

"Lady," squealed the clerk outside, "you can't go in there! Them boys ain't got nothin' on. They ——"

"A lod I should care! Otto!" Her weight terrified Sergeant Cobb. A panel cracked, he thought; and the respectability of the United States Army Recruiting Service was maintained solely by his muscles.

"You clear out, Mrs. Obermuller," he panted.

"You gif me Otto that's in there ant I clear oud! Otto, I seen you sneakin' off! You come out or I'll ——"

The panels complained. The boys had scattered, frantic, on the search for essential garments; but Otto stood, one foot suspended, miserable and red.

"Kid," gasped Sergeant Cobb, "it ain't no good! Oh, I'll send him right away, lady. Only ——"

The matron resisted. Otto dropped his foot and cleared his throat, emitting a wabbling voice:

"Mamma, you go home. I'll ——"

"And I stay here while you come out!"

"Kid," said Cobb, "get your duds on an' get her away. I can't have things like this-all goin' on."

There was a hiatus in the affairs of the Zerbetta station until Otto sniffling faintly was bundled through the portals of rejection and Cobb wiped his forehead. He jumped at the violence of a single slap, applied directly. He looked for marks of this when, in mid-afternoon, he came upon Otto squatted on the granite base of the still fountain which marked the square's center. "Bud," he said bluntly, "those pals of yours say you ain't havin' an awful good time at home."

Otto took his eyes from the sentry pacing before the court-house.

"I ain't German," he muttered. "Papa, he wasn't neither. She took me out of high school, an' I was on the football team. An' she ain't poor. It's the best grocery in town ——"

"I guess she ain't very patriotic. Well," Cobb continued, clumsy from kindness, "those kids are startin' down to Columbus on the four o'clock."

Otto's short nose worked. Two tears rippled down his creamy cheeks, converged on his chin and dropped as one to the sunny dust.

"Aunt Elsie's let her kids go, an' one of 'em's only seventeen," he mourned. "If papa hadn't of gone off an' died! An' I can't even go to the movies 'less some one take me. 'Cause they got fillums about Bel——"

"Yes, that red-haired kid was tellin' me."

Recruiting sergeants are permitted to wear trousers. An act of great delicacy was born in Cobb's soul by this unhappiness. There existed a hole in his right pocket. He shifted two silver dollars, which presently slid chilly down his calf.

"If I'd got a mother like that," he stated, "I'd go a-w-o-l pretty dawn quick!"

"What's a-w-o-l?"

"Absent without leave from post of duty," said the sergeant, moving away.

"Here, mister, you dropped some ——"

"No, kid," Cobb grunted, "I ain't got nothin' to drop."

Even the solace of twenty films in prospect did not console Otto Obermuller. He sat jingling these coins and staring wretchedly at the pompous sentry. The court-house clock, its gilt hands glittering, said quarter of four. At four Bob and Jim and Nelson would leave for Columbus. Friendship demanded that he see the last of them. He got up sullenly and started down South Street, much bedecked with cheap small flags. The dollars jingled in his pocket. Through the recruiting-office window Sergeant Cobb watched him slouch along.

"If I was that kid," he reflected, "I'd hop the train to Columbus. They wouldn't know him from Adam's aunt down there."

Immediately Otto stopped. Then his bent neck stiffened. He began to run. His shoes twinkled on the pavement. He vanished and left the sergeant somewhat dazed.

II

San Antonio has a wicked charm which wakes at dusk. The old city sheds its daytime ugliness like a dirty dress

at the first star above the Alamo. The tin arcades catch down the light of gaudy shop fronts into a jeweled gleaming along the narrow streets suddenly fluid with restless, roaming folk. Little rivers wander crookedly under the main promenades, and some Spanish spirit has fastened colored lamps in the trees of their gullies, something Latin survives, besides the Mexican chatter heard now and then; music mellows the roar, and the legendary vice of the frontier has a gay frankness in the jostle.

July, 1917, saw many regiments belting the town, and night poured a khaki flood into the heart of this allurement. The flood boils most furiously on the stretch of East Houston Street, and male bubbles stray from the rush to linger and admire the mixed life that compensates briefly their dusty cantonment or the barracks on Fort Sam Houston hill, with young excited eyes. A medical major passing in a continuous flicker of salutes drew aside into the safety of a hotel entrance, his arm weary, promptly meeting a lieutenant who as promptly saluted.

"Oh, Lord, Brown," said the senior, "I've been flapping my hand all over the town! We ought to wear blinders. It's ghastly!"

"It is," the lieutenant agreed; a tall, thick fellow, wilted about the collar. He regarded East Houston Street keenly, a trifle absently. "I've been running round in circles. There must be ten thousand—twenty thousand enlisted men in town."

"Yes, I've saluted about that many times. Come on and sit down."

"Sorry, Major, I'm sleuthing."

"When did they transfer you to the Military Police? Sleuthing? Any one could see you a mile off."

Lieutenant Brown chuckled.

"Well, I'm trailing my orderly. I gave him ten dollars this morning, out of the goodness of my heart; and now I'm scared. I'm watching him spend it. He's been to three movies and he's had twelve ice-cream sodas. 'Tisn't safe. He'll probably die. He's over in that soda joint now. I can see him from here."

"What on earth did you give him ten dollars for? That's wild extravagance. You bachelors!"

"I don't know why I did. He's so awfully military, though. He never calls me 'you,' and he's nothing but a rookie. April vintage. He's such an ass," said Brown, trying to defend his conduct, "that it tickles me. He thinks he's a brigadier general. There he is! And he's got a box of candy! I ought to stop him."

He beamed. Actually he was delighted with his favorite's harmless diversions, and the swagger of Private John Smith crossing East Houston Street was a marvelous thing. He walked with a hand on either starched hip, and the light made his flawless leggings gleam like a mahogany table newly polished. His chin strap, nicely blackened, made an oval in his tan, and his hat had the exact ripple of the brim that spells perfection to the enlisted dandy.

"Fine," said the major generously. "He's been using lime to get his clothes that white. Vanity, all is vanity."

"He's a good sort of kid," remonstrated Lieutenant Brown, mildly offended.

Private John Smith took position by a support of the iron arcade and lounged on it, dropping caramel papers at intervals, becoming rigid when an officer appeared and saluting with a sweep that threatened his hat's safety. Meanwhile, through his haughty mask of satiety, there glowed a rapture. His eyes roamed; he devoured the parade.

"Small-town kid," the major guessed.

"No; Columbus, Ohio, on his service record."

"He looks," the surgeon commented, "truly rural. How young they are! How young!"

"Of course they are," Brown said. "And the younger they are the better they do. They get into the traces. Now, you can turn any old thing into infantry, really; but artillery's different. You have——"

"It's queer," the major interrupted. "Colonel Coy was just telling me at dinner how perfectly impossible it is to shape up infantry unless you catch 'em young. He

says anything with two legs can be made into artillery; but ——"

Lieutenant Brown sniffed his derision. He was lighting a cigar when a howl, feminine but blood-curdling, sheared the woven noise of East Houston Street, and Private Smith wobbled from the arcade post, spilling caramels. His feet slung aimlessly as if thrashing water. His mouth became the slit of a tragic mask. He leaped up the sidewalk in wild ungainly steps and whirled about a corner. A flight of small boys swooped on the caramels, and through their activity galloped a large unattractive lady, her bonnet covered with blue cornflowers tilting over an eye; and as she galloped she howled.

The crowd took up this pastime with deep zeal. A dozen worldly women gathered their gay skirts and trotted. A wedge of soldiers outdistanced the pursuer yelling blissfully. A colonel, a fireman, a civilian constable and six quartermaster second lieutenants flocked after. Brown wriggled and ran among this press, but the business ended in the darker cross block with a confusion of silly questions, an episode of San Antonio's night; and the puzzled officer drifted off to the park edge where his car waited and drove up to Fort Sam Houston just as the bugles chanted their final order of the soldier's long day.

Next morning he learned the aspect of the distracted glance, Private John Smith furnishing the source of knowledge. Outwardly the big obedient creature was unchanged, except for this symptom, but his eyes rolled left and right, and he rode behind Brown with constant turnings through the desolation then called Camp Wilson, a tormented slope of porous soil sprinkled with unfloored shacks. The regiment, sweating nobly, showed its ability to cover five miles without sunstroke, and the adjutant was pleased.

"But what's the matter with your dog robber, Brown?"

"I don't know, sir." Brown beat the buff powder from his shirt front and looked after Private John Smith, who was leading the soiled mounts away from the mess veranda. Fort Sam Houston parade ground offers a

fine perspective. The drooping horses and the uneasy figure waned toward a wide hollow lined with stables and gun sheds. In the cruelty of noon his dejection hurt Brown.

"He looks all in," said the adjutant; "I expect this heat's pretty hard on these Northerners. Oh, by the way!" He raised his voice, briskly assuming control of the regimental group. "There's a circular from department headquarters, and Colonel Seeley had me on the 'phone this morning. There's a boy in some artillery outfit, enlisted under age. His mother's come down hunting him. The colonel says she's a holy terror. Got the general out of bed some ungodly hour. Colonel Seeley wants action. She's making a nuisance of herself. I've got a description of him. Please come to the office after mess and look it over. He's using a fake name, of course."

The battery commanders nodded wearily.

"I don't see why they can't be a little more careful at the recruiting stations," a captain complained. The medical major lifted an ironic eye to Brown above a frayed English weekly, as the lieutenant strolled near him.

"Good-bye, orderly," he whispered.

"Oh, hell!" said the lieutenant, "I suppose so, the poor pup! And I was going to make a corporal out of him!"

His bitterness swelled when Private Smith came to clean boots after lunch, and his innocuous glory freshened the dull room.

"Will the lieutenant want the polo pony this evenin'?"

"No, I won't." Brown shook his head.

"Very good, sir."

Private Smith collected the boots and a handful of spurs, his hat, with the red cord still unfaded, dangling on a thumb, and tiptoed to the door.

"Smith!" cried the officer.

"Sir?"

"Oh—nothing." Then his sympathy washed away a mountain chain of army regulations. "If I go talk it over with your mother ——"

The spurs jangled on the floor.

"It won't do no good, sir. She—she's German."

"How old are you?" Brown growled.

"Seventeen next September. Oh, I dunno why I ever sent Lottie my picture! That's it; that done it! I s'pose she went pokin' round in drawers an' things. I dunno why I did that! It hadn't any name signed to it. Lottie's my sister, sir."

Evidently in his vainglory Private Smith had sent a postal photograph to gladden Lottie, and with crossed cannon on his collar and a San Antonio postmark there would be sufficient clews. Meanwhile no military code yet published directs a lieutenant how to deal with an enlisted man who sits on his bedroom floor, weeping.

"I'm awfully sorry for you, Smith," he said.

Otto Obermuller took up the refrain of his woe, and Lieutenant Brown listened, finally advised.

"The war won't be over for a long time, Smith. You can enlist again when you're eighteen."

"I'll have to go home, an' everybody's gone. Couldn't the lieutenant ——"

"I can't lie you out of this!" Brown snapped. "Look here, clean those things up and—and stay here."

"Very good, sir."

Even in his extremity the soldier was correct.

Brown walked through the horse-reeking hollow past the stables and up into the Old Post of the fort, a gracious half-moon of ancient trees and green stone houses. He was stewing with mutiny and the sun chewed his neck. Seven years' immersion in this world told on his conscience. Why should a mother, beyond beggary, drag her son out of the one road? He fretted, glaring at the somnolent dignity of department headquarters. The sentry at the Carson Street gate came to present arms with a click, and the pride of service stood embodied for the officer. He turned up the line of shops and boarding-houses at the infantry stride, whistling between his teeth, and came to the army bank.

The subsequent report of an inspector into the matter of the desertion of Pvt. John Smith, actually Otto Ober-

muller, from Battery B, 495th F. A., established the following facts:

That Private Smith was observed leaving the quarters of 1st Lieut. Madison Brown, F. A., commanding B Battery, 495th F. A., between the hours of 4 and 5 P. M., carrying a suitcase, the property of 1st Lieut. Brown;

That Private Smith was then acting as orderly to Lieut. Brown, and that on being questioned by 1st Serg. Michael Fitzhugh, B Battery, 495th F. A., Private Smith stated that the suitcase contained garments of 1st Lieut. Brown which he was taking to be pressed;

That Private Smith was last seen by Corp. Henry Latour, B Battery, 496th F. A., boarding an Alamo Plaza street car about 6 P. M.;

That Private Smith was reported absent without leave the following morning;

That 1st Lieut. Brown admitted ordering Private Smith to take certain garments; namely, a civilian suit of blue serge and a raincoat, to a tailor to be cleaned and pressed; that these garments had never been delivered; that Private Smith when last seen by Lieut. Brown was in a depressed state of mind and unattentive to his proper duties; that Private Smith had no government property in his possession beyond his own wearing apparel, and no funds within the knowledge of the enlisted men acquainted with him.

This report, duly rendered and backed in blue paper, was forwarded in duplicate to Mrs. Christina Obermuller, Zerbetta, Ohio. The original reposes at department headquarters, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

III

The major had lately seen so much salt water that another stretch, however famous, simply irritated him by the prophecy of more seasickness. The channel, beyond this English roadstead, looked sulky under the charming sky; and the sands, barely speckled with bathers, did not attract him. He idled an hour of the delay at luncheon in one of the brick hotels that lined the ocean drive, watching a convalescent subaltern repel waitresses who

hovered about him with unasked chutney and extra soda bottles. He read a lengthy letter published in the local paper on the Irish conscription question and found it amazingly dull, even to an accompaniment of brandy and water. The subaltern concluded his boredom by approaching him.

"I dare say, sir, we're waitin' for the same thing. Seems we'll be here until five o'clock. Stupid, isn't it?"

"It's not wildly exciting," said the major.

"Oh, rather not! But I hear some nice old ladies are doin' a garden party for the Red Cross, and two of your destroyers are playin' baseball, lendin' their services, and so on. We might barge along and give it the look over ——"

"Once over," the major amended, seizing his cap.

"Ah, yes, quite so. Once over."

They meandered in the background of the little town, discoursing amiably of hospitals and the idiocies of the amateur nurse, coming at last to an ivy-coped gateway in a wall posted with advertisements of this fête, and a loud professional voice wailed "Strike—one." After a doubtful silence there was applause. The major chuckled, following the subaltern up a path between booths and the necessary smiling ladies of a Red Cross fair.

The game was in progress and a deep fringe of polite Britons stood observing it with earnest gravity. The Boy Scouts and the crews of the contesting destroyers supplied such noise as was current on this circle of glossy bush and summer gowning. But the teams were heated to a happy disregard of audiences. For the enlightenment of spectators, an ensign told the major, one team was wearing white, and the accumulated grass stains were astounding.

"The grass," said the subaltern, "is rather long for a decent pitch."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Dare say I'm wrong. Cricket, y'know. Er—what's the lad with the basket on his head about?"

"That," the major said, "is the umpire."

The pitcher of the white team contorted his trunk,

causing a sedate ripple among the watchers, who would, the major thought, believe this healthy youth in great pain. Directly the familiar crack started a yell. A blue player slid home and picked himself up, scarlet, his overshirt mightily torn.

"Oh, Eddie!" said the bench, in falsetto horror.

"Eddie" sidled into a laburnum thicket with a friend or two, and an unabashed native of New York City wandered engagingly forth after a brief seclusion, hunting pins. The major lit a cigarette.

"I think," he said, "I'll have a look at Eddie."

"I don't think he seemed hurt, sir." The subaltern was surprised into the protest.

"No, but—one minute."

The committee on repairs had finished its labor and Eddie was polishing his chin with a borrowed handkerchief. As the major put aside a bough he spoke sorrowfully:

"An' it comes out of my pay, too!"

"Well," said a friend, "it ain't so much."

"But I'm tryin' to save money. I owe a fellow fifty dollars —— 'Ten-shun!"

"Rest!" the major ordered.

The other sailors melted back from this interview, puzzled.

"Well," said the officer, "and what's your name?"

"Eddie Johnson, sir."

"You seem to stick to good ordinary sensible names," the major grinned.

"Sir?"

"Don't be silly! I'm not going to cable Zerbetta, Ohio."

"No," said the deserter; "the major's a friend of Lieutenant Brown's, ain't he? I used to see you with him last summer. An'—where is the lieutenant?"

"Captain Brown—I might see him in a day or so. Any message?"

"If the major'd tell him, I've got thirty dollars saved up—and where could I send it? I—I've got to pay him back."

"Of course," said the major, "I don't know anything about your debts, Eddie Johnson."

"No, sir—that's so. Well—just tell him the Navy's all right, but—I wish I hadn't sent Lottie that post-card!"

The subaltern was rather disturbed by the major's chuckles, and the game did not appear to interest the American as much as a national sport should.

"One constantly hears," he alleged, "that the Anglo-Saxon's dyin' out in the States. Now that lad you went to look after. He's as English as Westminster Abbey, y'know."

"Yes, his name's Eddie Johnson," said the major. "Suppose we start back. It's four."

However, he lingered. Eddie Johnson was coming to bat and his swagger was superb as ever. He glanced about the alien field with a condescending calm, a hand on either hip. His scarf concealed the row of pins, and his shoes, just rubbed in the laburnum shade, gleamed on the turf. His white cap was canted down to one haughty eyebrow and the tattoo shone like a jewel on the new tan of his chest.

"Born in the Navy, I fancy," observed the subaltern.

"Oh, yes," the major chuckled; "he's been in the service quite a while."

*Out of the Sky

By Alden Brooks

The porter hurried with the valise through the crowds of soldiers and civilians that thronged the station; and a few paces behind followed Lieutenant Daveran, pale, erect, faded uniform well brushed and pressed, the ribbons of the Military Cross and the Legion of Honor upon his breast. As the two of them reached the long line of coaches that comprised the Marseilles express, the lieutenant came to a standstill and cried out after the porter:

"No, no, my friend! No need to go hunting a devil of a distance down there. Here you are! Any first-class compartment will do."

The porter returned along the platform and glanced into the compartment indicated.

"No corner seat vacant in there," he muttered.

"In with it!" exclaimed the lieutenant, with a jerk of his cane. "Have you forgotten that we're at war and that last comers must not be choosers?"

While the porter mounted into the train with the valise, the lieutenant waited there, apparently oblivious of the arrested stares of several passers-by. But, of a sudden, a tall, white-haired colonel approached and laid a hand on his arm. The lieutenant turned, then brought his hand smartly to the salute as he smiled a quick recognition.

"Well, well!" said the colonel. "I see it's no longer Sergeant Daveran but Lieutenant Daveran. This is the first I've heard of further promotions. All my congratulations!"

"Thank you, Colonel; thank you!"

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"On leave?"

"Leave of convalescence."

"Wounded?"

"No, no; just a stupid attack of pleurisy, thanks to the abominable weather we've been having at the front."

"Ah, yes—dreadful! And yet we old-timers, closeted in our bureaus, how we envy you young men your youth!"

"We know that, Colonel; and so one more reason why we have no complaint to make."

The colonel smiled.

"In any case, Madame Daveran will be thankful for this further opportunity of seeing her husband. Kindly remember me to her."

The porter descended from the train and accepted the lieutenant's tip. The colonel extended his hand in good-bye.

"You mustn't miss your train, and I mustn't miss mine. A pleasant convalescence! Do you plan to return to the front once more?"

"Most certainly."

"And your seat in the Chamber of Deputies?"

"Will continue to remain empty until the end of the war."

"Even should the country need your eloquence?"

The lieutenant lifted his hands beseechingly.

"My eloquence, indeed! And France needs men, all her men, great and small!"

"Yet, if all the other deputies had done as you have, abandoned their seats in the Chamber and volunteered as common soldiers, who would there have been left to govern us?"

For a second, Lieutenant Daveran searched the eyes of the old officer; then he turned his head away and, glancing dreamily down the platform, said, in a deep, vibrating voice:

"In these terrible days, each man must follow his own ideal. For me, there was something ignoble in rousing men's passions by my speeches and then letting them go forth alone to sacrifice their heart's blood."

The station-master blew his whistle for the second time. Lieutenant Daveran shook the colonel's hand, saluted, and turned and pulled himself up into the compartment. A minute later, the train began to roll slowly out of the station.

For a time, Daveran sat back on his seat in the crowded compartment and became preoccupied with his newspapers. There was much of interest to read; and once he frankly took out his note-book and, with a quiet smile, scribbled down a memorandum of the old peasant woman, mortally wounded by a bomb, who gave to the priest a last prayer of *"Vive la France!"* Of course, it was just a newspaper yarn, but it read well.

As the train sped further and further away from Paris, the benches little by little became vacant; finally, he was able to move over into a corner seat. A few stations more, and he had the compartment all to himself. Then he put his feet up on the seat opposite and, sitting there by the window, just glanced out at the flowing stream of hillsides and highroads and villages, and thought not a little of the lovely woman he had not seen for so long and to whom he was now returning so fast.

The train was slowing down once more, and familiar landmarks were flashing before him. He jumped to his feet. He had nearly overslept himself. Had he actually done so, what a ridiculous proceeding for a man of his position! He reached up hurriedly for his valise in the rack and let its weight tumble down upon him to the floor. The effort made him perspire a little. He realized he was still as feeble as a child.

Many people were upon the station platform, and, as Lieutenant Daveran descended from his compartment, a general buzz of conversation went up. A small girl was the first to greet him. He bent over her and, lifting her off the ground, kissed her on each cheek. Then the small girl turned and, tossing back both her braids, made way for her mother. And while Madame Daveran gracefully offered her face to her husband, the sun came out brightly between a break in the clouds, and, except for a few here and there in black, every one seemed to be smiling. With

that, leaning heavily on his cane, yet bowing and saluting repeatedly, Lieutenant Daveran moved slowly toward the exit. Outside were many people more. They promptly flocked around the large auto waiting there, into the front seat of which the small girl had already climbed beside the chauffeur.

At last, Lieutenant and Madame Daveran settled themselves in the back seat, and the chauffeur tried to drive off slowly through the crowd. But the crowd only became denser; and there was the local prefect still talking and laughing, one hand on the door of the auto. So Lieutenant Daveran touched the chauffeur on the back and, rising to his feet, faced the prolonged outburst of applause with a patient smile. Of a sudden there was a deep silence—only the distant echoes of the Paris train rushing on through other countrysides.

"Fellow citizens, thank you for this welcome, thank you in the name of all those others back there in the trenches; for I know that in welcoming me, you are only welcoming them!" (Loud cries of: "No! No! *Vive* Daveran!" "Hurrah for the soldier deputy!") "And let me assure you of one thing: As they come back to you, some wounded, some sick, some worn out, all of them greedy for the smell of these sweet fields here, nothing warms their hearts more or gives them greater courage than the knowledge that you Frenchmen and you Frenchwomen here, of civil life, are ready to make the same sacrifices as they. Yes! To-day, at last we are all united in this supreme crisis of our race. Shall republican government stand or fall? Shall the people rule themselves or shall they be ruled by despots? That is the solemn question before us. And the patriotism lurking in each of our bosoms has risen like a mighty tidal wave and swept all before it. That the *boche* and his *Kultur* may perish, that our homes may be swept free of his murder and his pillage and his rape; above all, that the pure and ennobling institutions of democracy may flourish over all the earth and in all parliaments, we will each of us sacrifice everything we own—our money, our lives ——"

"One minute!" bawled a loud voice in the rear. "Is it good and certain that it's your own money and your own life you're going to sacrifice like that?"

An angry murmur of protest went up as every one turned about for a glimpse of the offender. It proved to be a surly-looking soldier, half sitting on a fence back there, arms folded. Lieutenant Daveran fixed the fellow intently and, shaking his forefinger at him, answered deliberately, in a clear, firm voice:

"Yes, my friend—my life. And yours, also, if need be—both of them on the same day, or the same night, without one tithe of difference between." A burst of applause followed, but the speaker waved it down with one hand and continued: "And, incidentally, I've just come from the front and I'm about to return shortly. I trust it's the same with you——" Rude hands, however, now shoved the man out of sight. "So I repeat what I say—sacrifices—the same sacrifices for one and all—yes; the same sacrifices for one and all. Already the times are hard, I know; but I warn you they will be harder still before the end arrives. The future is going to ask even more of our patience and abnegation and courage than do these trying days. So then—what of our answer? Are we to surrender ignominiously to circumstances? Or are we to go on to the bitter end, to that last quarter of an hour wherein victory is born? Can there be a second's doubt?"

"No!" shouted several voices.

"Very well. Then, happy in the certainty that, though the bestial enemy be strong, we are stronger still, let us go forward shoulder to shoulder, pilgrims all of this ancient religion whose one holy prayer is, *'Vive la France!'*"

A brisk spasm of hand-clapping broke out as the speaker sat down. But now the chauffeur, with a deep toot of his horn, scattered those ahead to one side, and suddenly the auto was off down the road at a merry pace.

No sooner had Daveran arrived home than he was forced to receive a deputation of farmers, anxious for a definite promise that the district would receive potato-

plant in time for the approaching season. In a carefully worded speech he tried to allay their anxieties, but they were not easily satisfied, and they surrounded him with all their fears and bickerings until nearly dinner-time. Next day, other interviews had to be given, and so, too, during the succeeding days, an apparently endless file of electors, demanding this and that, until it seemed as if his whole convalescence must be spent in attending to the needs of his constituents. But, finally, Madame Daveran intervened. Her husband had come home to rest, and rest now he should. Doors were shut upon the outside world, visitors turned away, and sun-baths advocated instead.

An eccentric little man from Paris managed, however, to pass through the barriers; in truth, he represented a too-well-known publishing house to be kept out. But Daveran was very surprised at the man's request. Seconds passed before he could look up from the floor and say, with an embarrassed little smile:

"Can your house really be in earnest?"

"But most certainly so!"

"Well—of course—well, I can scarcely refuse so flattering an offer, and yet I don't know that I can find time to give to it just at present ——"

"'Time?'"

"Yes; for if my speeches are to be published, they must first be revised."

"But why? Isn't the flaming word a thousand times preferable to ——"

"Yes, yes; I know," Daveran muttered. "But there are always changes that must be made—adjectives to be eliminated ——"

The little man flopped up his hands with an impatient gesture.

"Eliminate adjectives! But, my dear sir, adjectives are the very vertebræ of oratory. What is a speech stripped of its adjectives? Nothing—nothing at all! Often just the naked, indecent fact. Don't think of such a thing, I beg of you! Just let us have your speeches as they are and trust our judgment and, for your part, if I may say

so, sit back here through your convalescence in undisturbed tranquillity."

Lieutenant Daveran smiled once more.

"Very well," he said, in a low voice; "and I don't doubt you are right."

When Madame Daveran received an official account of the interview, she was very pleased.

"It'll be so gratifying having all your speeches reunited thus in book-form."

"And what is more important," he said, as he sat back in his chair and placed his finger-tips together, "I shall be hammering home upon the public once more, be continually hammering home, driving them along the right path."

"I hope so."

He reached up idly for her arm.

"'Hope so,' my darling! Only 'hope so?' Don't you *know* so?"

"Yes, of course—I meant that."

"Then my darling should say what she means and not say what she doesn't; for it's by well-chosen words alone that one rules and governs in this modern world"—he smiled up at her—"and you know I am ever and always your devoted slave."

She ran her fingers lightly over his hair and said, with a chuckle:

"Well then, come in to lunch."

Slowly Daveran's health returned, despite one or two setbacks, whereon Madame Daveran became very adamant; and toward the very end of his period of leave, he was able to launch forth on a whirlwind tour of his electorate, making six or more speeches a day.

"I am very glad I was able to do it," he said, that last evening before his departure, as they sat there together, man and wife. "They needed to see me once more; and I needed to see them. But, by the way, to change the subject abruptly and talk of other matters, I've been thinking things over recently and, well, I have a simple question to ask you."

"What on earth can it be?"

"Well, it's this: All things considered, don't you think it's about time for us to have another child?"

With a short burst of ironic laughter, she rose and went across the room.

"Ah—that! No! Never again!"

She fumbled around in the dark a moment before finding a box of matches.

"Why 'never again?'" he asked curtly, as she lit the lamp.

"Because three's enough."

"Really? And yet there are women who've had more."

"I dare say. But three is enough for me. At least for the present. Why, I've hardly got through nursing Marcella!"

There was a moment's silence; then he said, in his forceful voice:

"If it's a question of running a hospital, or even driving an ambulance along the front, or doing a hundred and one other tasks men have been accustomed to do, you are at once all eagerness; but if it's a question of fulfilling the simple duty nature fitted you for ——"

"Oh—'nature!' Nature doesn't know half the time what she wants herself. And I contend that when a woman has brought three children into the world and has the care of them, she can disregard nature and any one else, particularly in war-time."

"Yes; how idiotic of me to have mentioned the subject even!"

"Well, you can be mean about it if you like—though I don't really see any reason why you have a right to be. It isn't as if I hadn't been willing—and now—well, after all, women must be given a certain leeway in such matters ——"

He waved her down with his hand.

"Good, good, good! Say nothing further. I put the question to you; you answered it. That's all I wanted; I ask no more."

"Frankly, dear, I should think you wouldn't."

He turned round abruptly and stared at her.

"Even though it would give me great pleasure to know

before I go off, perhaps to my death, that there is another child, possibly a son this time, growing up to take my place?"

She returned toward him, with affection in her eyes.

"Oh, you're not going to die."

He stared at her again, indignantly.

"I'm not, eh? How do you know I'm not?"

"Oh, because ——"

"Hm—the same 'because,' I suppose, that tells you to shirk your duty."

"So it's now become my duty, is it?"

"It always has been your duty." He leveled his finger at her solemnly. "You are a Frenchwoman, and France needs children more than any other country in the world. Therefore, let the women do their share like the men. Let each woman bring into the world, not only three children but five, seven, nine, even as their ancestors did, so that, in due time, a vast new generation may come up strong and healthy over the hillsides into the full dawn of victory!"

A moment's silence followed. She looked at him, a queer expression on her face. Finally she said, with a little chuckle:

"Oh, I know why you're suddenly so keen about having another child. You've been led to talk about it recently in your speeches, advocated children by the gross for others. *Monsieur* himself must now live up to his fine words." He turned his back upon her with a gesture of disgust and went to the mantelpiece. "Yes, yes," she continued laughingly; "and I remember, just the other day, reading in the paper something you said. What was it? 'If the women of France are in tears these days, it is only because they cannot bring forth children fast enough to replace the dead.' Wasn't that it?" He took a cigarette from its yellow package and tried to light it indifferently, but she only pointed her finger at him. "Oh, how you are blushing! No, really; I haven't seen you blush so in years."

"And if I am," he suddenly growled, "I'm not ashamed of myself."

"Oh, of course not, dear; and I suppose somebody must say these things—only, well—I somehow wish you didn't have to say them all the time."

"Really?" he said, with a sneer. "Well, if I'm not ashamed of myself, I'm ashamed of you."

"Oh, come now, Georges!"

"Yes; just to think that a *boche* wife would do better by me!" The smile left her lips, and she grew a trifle pale. "To think," he continued, "that you, my wife, will let me go back to the front and suffer all the horrors of war, while you remain here and placidly refuse to do your share!"

"Oh, all the horrors of war indeed!" she said, with a sudden flare of temper. "Let me see—how many bottles of champagne was it you wrote me you consumed in one day, all of you, in that château? Well, I've forgotten; but if you call that suffering all the horrors of war, I'm sure there are several I know of ready to exchange places with you. Not other staff-officers, of course, but just simple soldiers."

He glared at her.

"Now, just what do you mean by that?"

For a moment she held her ground; then slowly the anger died out of her eyes.

"I meant nothing, dear, nothing at all. Forgive me."

He shoved aside her advances.

"No; I'm serious."

"Even so, I really don't see why we've got to spend this last evening together quarreling. And, after all, I'll do whatever you want me to do."

"Then why do you insult me?"

"I never insulted you."

"You did! You implied, in so many words, that I was a slacker, a hypocrite, and a coward."

"Why, Georges, I didn't! All that's simply your own imagination. How could I ever think such things of you, even if you hadn't distinguished yourself the way you have all through the war?"

"Anyway, why do you insult me?" he went on, without listening to her. "Simply because I suggested that

you should do your duty, as a loyal Frenchwoman should?"

"How unfair you are! Can't you see my point of view just a little? Can't you see that while for you another child is nothing, for me it is everything? It's all a big problem, particularly just now, with the war still on, food, milk, sugar becoming scarce, life in every way growing more and more complicated and uncertain. Can't you see that?" She paused, then gave a little sigh. "But I see you don't. Well, possibly you're right—you always are, you know—only, of course, it's easy to have these ideals for *other* people and much harder to carry them out. If you were the one to bring the children into the world, I wonder how many we'd have—five, seven, nine, eleven?" She gave a little laugh. "But that's generally the way with theorists; they never have the personal experience, and they just try and drive others headlong, often over fatal obstacles. And that's why, though sometimes what they say is very good, at other times, well, they're just talking to hear themselves talk—well, I don't exactly mean that——"

"Ah, no!" he exclaimed. "That's enough."

"No, Georges; listen——"

He broke away from her savagely and slammed the door behind him. He went out into the garden.

It was a soft April night. For a few minutes he stalked about in the dark, then sat down abruptly in the hammock under the linden trees. He was furious with his wife. But he was also furious with every one and everything. As he leaned back in the hammock and listened to the insect world above, buzzing in the linden blossoms, angry resolutions teemed in his brain. He would show her, by God! He would show them all! Yes; he would go even further still, even though it placed his life in absolute danger, even though, this time, it might mean death.

A figure approached uncertainly in the darkness. He did not move. Presently her hand ran down the hammock and touched his shoulder. Madame Daveran sat down in the hammock and half leaned over him.

"Forgive me," she whispered.

He offered no reply, just sat there, motionless. She took up his hand and, after stroking it a while, kissed it.

"As soon as I get back," he said of a sudden, in a cold, decisive voice, "I shall apply to enter the Aviation Corps."

For answer, she kissed his hand again.

"Then, perhaps, I shall be spared the sneers of my wife at my courage and sincerity." Silence. "Yes, and join up with a fighting squadron." Another silence. "Do you believe me?"

"They won't take you," she muttered.

He glanced down at her through the dark.

"Why not?"

"You're too old."

"I'll make them."

"Yes; no doubt you will," she answered, as if in a dream, "for you always end by making everybody do as they should—inspiring them, that is—and I'm absolutely unworthy of you. Kiss me!"

Afterward, in the middle of the night, in the solitude of his bed, he woke up suddenly all in a tremble, heart fluttering, a terrified cry upon his lips. He had just been up there in his dreams, way up there in the skies, and suddenly he had felt nothing between himself and death thousands of feet below, nothing but that frail, tossing plane of canvas. And even now, as he lay there fully awake, the impression of that awful suspense lingered in all his muscles. Then he wondered if he hadn't actually cried aloud. Apparently not. At least, his wife had not heard him. Then, for a long time, he just remained there inert, thinking. But next morning, once out of bed, he felt all right again.

And Madame Daveran's last entreaties were of no avail.

So, a month later, Lieutenant Daveran became a member of the Aviation Corps; and the newspapers made mention of the fact in one of those cryptic notices:

Lieutenant X., the well-known deputy from Y., has been transferred, at his own request, from General Z.'s staff to the Aviation Corps.

But he had hardly been out two days on the aviation field before he realized he had made a terrible mistake. How could he ever have thought of such a thing? Why, even just here, on this training-ground, he must, day by day, expose himself heedlessly to sudden death! A cold panic seized him. Even that terrible night under bombardment, when his apparent coolness had won him his decoration—even that night was as nothing compared to any one of these terrible new hours. And the worst was that it must go on—no turning back now, no escape. The die was cast.

Now and then, to be sure, he motored home to his wife and, visiting his constituents in his new insignia, made a few speeches, and so tried to imagine circumstances were as they were before. But it was a poor substitute. His speeches lacked inspiration—that other thought was so settled there in his mind. And though, as the weeks went by, he began to acquire a little confidence in the roaring motor under him—it had such a will of its own, rushed him through the air so powerfully—yet the dreadful ague never left him. It was just as if he were ill with some disease—a disease that harassed him and made him almost a different man. Even that title, " the well-known deputy from Y," irritated him beyond measure. If he were so important as all that, why did every one leave him in such a position as this? It was not for him to suggest anything, of course; but, well, shall a willing horse be allowed to work himself to death? Incidentally, his publishers did say something upon the subject; they said that it was a shame that a man of his talents should be allowed to waste himself in such a position. Let each man be given the task he can do best. But it was nothing more than a comment; it went no further—just the weeks slipping away; circumstances settling round him and holding him as if in a vise. He had wished to become an aviator; he was now an aviator, or shortly to become one.

So the best future he could promise himself was a post at Toulon or Bordeaux, skimming over the waters and looking for submarines. It would be dangerous work;

but not so dangerous as the front—the less of two evils. Meanwhile, however, he kept up his old exterior. And one Sunday, when his wife said to him: "Dearest boy, you look more and more worried. What's the matter? Are you unhappy about anything?" he merely replied with a scowl: "Unhappy? Well, do you think I can be happy when the Germans are still at Noyon?" And so, finally, that last day at the aviation school when the call came for volunteers for the fighting squadrons, he hesitated a brief moment, glanced round at his companions, then lit a cigarette, and sauntered forth among the first.

A second later, even as he was standing there, he cursed himself for a fool. Yet, paradoxically, a certain self-satisfaction warmed him. No matter what the future, no one now could ever say that he had not lived up to all his words.

And the front was not as bad as all that; it was even better than the training-school. Once up there in the air, one was one's own master—no need to go looking for trouble unless one wanted to. So each time he went up, it was the same dodge—he simply never attempted to fulfil any of the missions assigned to him. As for his ever giving battle to a German opponent, should he meet one, the idea never so much as entered his mind. His sole anxiety was that, some day, some one, sooner or later, would find him out. Slowly this fear grew into a veritable terror. It made him morose. As the days went by and his failures seemed to be adding up behind his back, he tried to escape from every one, be entirely by himself. The others, however, one by one sought him out. Strange to say, they evidently desired his friendship. They even treated him like something superior to themselves. Grotesque circumstance this; for, though none could talk with any fluency and some even had queer, crude ideas upon subjects of national importance, all were gifted with qualities he would never possess. So grotesque was it that, on the one or two occasions they pushed him up out of his chair as a jolly good fellow and tried to force a speech out of him, he nearly broke down for want of a suitable something to say, and, as a make-

shift, had to set them laughing with jokes and anecdotes.

Then, at the very hour when he felt suspicion must at last have fixed itself upon him, like a gift from heaven, his release came. It was an army order recommending that all men over thirty be weeded out of the fighting squadrons. It was almost incredible news. For days, he was intoxicated with hidden joys. His old self-confidence returned in leaps and bounds as the vistas of that other life back there opened up again. No longer a continual battle against death and frigid altitudes, but a return to home and fireside and political honors. In the mess-room, one afternoon, several brother aviators congratulated him on his good fortune. He wanted to smile, but he did not smile; instead, he frowned slightly and asked:

"Why good luck!"

"Because you're out of it for good."

"And well out of it," added some one else.

Daveran drew himself up and assumed an easy, well-balanced attitude.

"Well, that is one way of looking at it. And, of course, I know what this flying-game is, and I've never pretended to be one of its heroes—not by any means—as you all know. Still, boys, there's something wonderful in the atmosphere out there just the same, something you can't exchange for anything else in the whole world. And, personally, I can promise you one thing, and that is that I'm mighty sorry to have to leave it all now and go back there and sit down placidly among the stale commonplaces of civil life."

At that moment, the commandant of the sector entered the room. Daveran turned to him and extended both his hands.

"Commandant, I appeal to you. Can't you tell them that I'm not too old to stay out here?"

The commandant smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"You're no longer a young man, Daveran; and it's young men we want."

Daveran threw up his hands with a pathetic gesture.

"Then I'm just senile—is that it?—only fit for the workhouse and an old-age pension."

"Not by any means. Well, why not speak to the general? Perhaps he can do something for you?"

"Do you really think so?"

"It's all in his hands."

"Then I'll speak to him."

"If you like; though my advice to you is to go back now to your seat in the Chamber of Deputies, and, as an experienced aviator, make them give us the machines we want."

"Ah, yes, Daveran; go ahead and do that," drawled a comrade, as he sauntered forth, lacing up his suit. "Why, the sheds are full of a lot of old taxi-cabs, that, if I had my way, I'd pour a can of juice over and make a fire of."

Every one laughed, including the commandant. Daveran waited a second, fingers slipped beneath the buttons of his jacket.

"Well," he finally said, with dignity, "be sure, gentlemen, that if I should go back, I'll do my best for you, all my best—uniformity of type, rapidity of delivery, precision and speed of motor. But, before dropping out of your ranks like this, I want to be sure of one thing—that I'm only good myself for the scrap-heap. I'll go and see the general."

Next day Daveran obtained an audience with the army commander in question, just as the latter was about to leave his headquarters. It was a small, sunny room in the wing of a château, the classical display of maps everywhere, the simple white tables, a typewriter clicking in the next room. And while the general stood there drawing on his gloves, Lieutenant Daveran spoke in a firm voice of his desire to remain on active service.

"I'm sorry, Lieutenant," the general answered, "but an exception in your case means an exception for every one. And to speak brutally, it's the machines we must save. Experience shows that it's the young men who cost less. They lose less machines."

Daveran was about to suggest again in that pathetic

way that, such being the case, he was senile, then, and only fit for the scrap-heap, but he remembered just in time how potent was the appeal. And yet he felt he must say something. So he bowed his head and said, in a low, vibrating voice:

"General, I regret my uselessness. But I wanted to let you know that all of us here under your command, all of us, young or old, ask no better than to go on with the fight to the bitter end, give all our blood to the last drop, that France may lift her head again and rise from her sufferings, victorious over herself and her vanquished enemies."

"Thank you," murmured the general somewhat confusedly. "When a man commands such men as yourself, Lieutenant Daveran, he can be assured of ultimate victory."

In the back of the room stood a tall colonel, arms folded. It was the chief of staff. The general turned and gave him a questioning glance.

"Can we make an exception in his case, Colonel?"

"Yes; let him be attached to headquarters here. We can use him and other men in the same category for our own work. At present, we've only Delattre and Rousseau really at our disposal, and it's not enough."

"Excellent idea!" exclaimed the general. He turned to Daveran. "Does that suit you?"

"Certainly, General. You're very kind."

The general showed a trace of emotion.

"That's right!" he growled. "Be sure and thank me before I send you out and make you break your neck. But you willed it so. Now I must be off. Colonel, will you arrange the details?"

After the general had left the room, the colonel turned to one of the tables and sat down before a large map. He said nothing for a moment, just ran his finger over the map. Daveran stood by his side and watched the finger. In the midst of all the sudden commotion in his soul, there rose out slowly a violent dislike of this tall chief of staff. Not a real man this, but a soulless, parchment-faced mathematician. And he disliked him all the

more as he remembered now how the man passed among those who knew as something of a superman, a military genius, in fact, one of the silent, relentless brains of the army.

"There it is," said the colonel, lifting up his pencil horizontally on the map. "Le Breil. See for yourself. Now I'm having a shed put up there for Delattre and Rousseau, but there'll be plenty of room for your machine and others still."

With that, he went on to explain succinctly Daveran's various duties. Daveran stood there at attention and bowed his understanding in each case. But his heart was beating wildly. Already it was taken for granted. He was not to have anything more to say. Instead of going back home to fame and parliamentary success and to wife and family, as he might so easily have done, he was going to jeopardize his life once more day after day, and this time under constant supervision. He could hardly believe his senses; it was too outrageous. All at once his thoughts leaped up in a frantic, panic-stricken determination to escape. How best could he appeal to this man's emotion? What terse phrases could he conjure into a quick, subtle argument for his release? But almost in the same flutter of excitement, his hopes fell. Yes; before this man, so devoid of all literary sense and fine sentiment, words would be of no avail. Facts alone would count with him.

And now the crucial moment had already passed. The colonel had risen from his chair. He extended his hand.

"Now go down at once to the P. C. M. A. and get a machine—and have no hesitation in making them give you a good one."

Daveran saluted and left the room. Outside, however, after he had taken a few paces, he had to stop where he was and stand there, arms akimbo. Why, in heaven's name hadn't he kept his mouth shut for once—just once?

At Le Breil a terrible gloom settled upon him. As Delattre and Rousseau warned him, there was work in plenty to be done, and often dangerous at that. But what

was worse was the utter sense of isolation that settled over him. He became embittered. He felt that every one had forgotten him, that he was simply some one's slave, without a will of his own. And why? What was the meaning of all this butchery? Of course, war was necessary, but it was awful how dependent man was upon man. Just one false step, perhaps just one miscalculation, or some minor factor of the personal equation, like a prejudice or an ill-thought-out theory, even one *false* word might send thousands and thousands of men to their death. And this last was a terrible thing, so terrible that only the experienced themselves—well, that was just the trouble in his own case; he had never had the experience, and he never would have. He had just waded out of his depth; war was for taller men than himself. And yet it irritated him continually as he realized what absolute reliance he had on the colonel. And even as he knew that each of the tasks set him was well thought-out and essential, so was he jealous of this man who could do such perfect work so silently. It irritated him but it also made the gloom sink deeper into his heart, for he understood that just as he had become a weapon wielded by a clever hand, so would he, one day, have to ring true.

Then, one early morning, while he was up there in the skies, he caught sight of an aeroplane swooping down out of the clouds full at him. He gave a terrified groan and, ducking low in his seat, shoved the "broomstick" violently forward and dove away headlong, but toppled over too far and nearly fell out despite his straps, and so scudded upside down a long, horrible minute, clinging frantically to the roaring engine, only to find himself of a sudden looping up again into mid-air, and right there the goggle-faced monster sweeping past and shooting a stream of bullets at him. Then he grabbed the handle of his own machine gun and, squeezing the trigger wildly, again darted over, nose first, straight after the other, firing, firing, until the earth unfolded itself in trees and meadows, suddenly leaped up and caught his swerving plane—and the doctor said:

"Take away all those flowers; the odor will only nauseate him."

"Yes," answered one of the nurses; "though I'll leave these tulips. They have no odor, and they were ordered by his wife."

He glanced up at the nurse and muttered feebly.

"How is she?"

No one answered him.

And, a little later, when he tried to say, "I'd like to speak to my wife," again no one answered him. People just went by there, at the foot of his bed. Now and then, one or two would glance his way and scowl sadly.

He was lying in a sort of alcove with whitewashed walls.

Presently it occurred to him that he was lying like this, in this hospital, on account of the fall—in spite of that terrible plunge through the skies he was, somehow, still alive—yes; just at the last minute he had righted the machine a little. But not enough. So he was lying here in this bed, just badly knocked out, just half out of his head, unable to move a muscle anywhere, not even his lips.

A troop of wounded soldiers, all freshly bandaged, limped past in the corridor at the foot of his bed. For some reason, the corridor ahead was blocked, and some had to stand there a minute.

"An aviator," explained the white-coated orderly, "paralyzed from a fall. So, you see, none of you boys have anything on him."

He tried to smile at them. He might be paralyzed for the moment, but he was not as bad as all that. And several of them were in acute pain, as he could see. The band moved on.

Then the hospital must be near the front. Of course. They couldn't have carried him far in this condition. And the continual rumbling he heard was cannon-thunder.

That evening, he managed to make the nurse understand he wished to talk. She leaned over and turned her ear close to his mouth.

"Then my wife knows?" he whispered.

"Yes; those flowers are from her."

"What did you tell her?"

"We told her you were wounded, but that your life was not in danger."

"Yes; that was right. You see, she's going to have a child soon. And any shock ——"

"I understand. When?"

"Soon, in a couple of months or so."

"Well then, try and rest quietly now and get well."

Shortly afterward, a doctor appeared.

"How is he?"

"He seems much better. I've actually had a talk with him."

"That's a good sign. And the X-ray shows nothing but a chipped vertebra. Complete rest and electric massage ought to set him up again."

The doctor was not mistaken.

In the following days, the electric massage unlocked one by one the cells in his body. He began to regain the use of all his muscles. Soon he was able to sit up in bed. Then several of his brother aviators paid him a visit. They showed him a photograph. It was of a man lying on a stretcher, clothes torn and rumpled and burned in patches. Above the closed eyes there was a big gash on the temple, and the legs were charred down to two stumps. A rope about the wrists kept the hands from falling off the stretcher.

"Who is it?" he asked.

"The *boche* you brought down."

Then, while he looked at the photograph again, all of them in turn tried to express their admiration of his courage and prowess. To loop the loop away from an adversary like that and come up on top of him was a feat worthy of the greatest. After they had gone, he lay back there, a queer joy running in his heart. No one would ever know now. And he could go back a hero—though a silent hero, ready only to do real work.

A few days later, he was up and able to walk about the hospital and its grounds. A week more, and he would be able to travel back to Paris of his own accord.

"You'll have a limp for a few months," the doctor warned him, "but it'll wear itself out with good care."

The day before he was to leave, an orderly brought him a letter inviting him to a dinner of French and English aviators. He held the letter in his hand for some time, then tossed it aside. No; he would not go. It would only mean his being called on for a speech, and—well, he had nothing more to say—nothing. With that, he sat down at a table, there in the hospital writing-room, and wrote out his refusal while the orderly waited. It took some time, for he could not be sure that the letter might not be read aloud at the dinner.

But no sooner had he handed the missive to the orderly and the orderly had left the room than he exploded with rage. More words, words, words in that letter—that was all.

Of a sudden, he hobbled over to the window and threw it open. He caught the orderly as he was passing beneath.

"Give it back to me."

The orderly handed up the letter. Taking it and crumpling it up in his hand, Daveran growled:

"Just tell 'em yourself I can't come."

*The Christmas Fight of X 157

How She Met U 309 and What Came of the Meeting

By Dana Burnet

He had gone over with the first American destroyer flotilla; had been shifted to the command of a converted yacht (this was in the glorious days of naval improvisation) and had come to grief at the hands of an itinerant mine that blew his vessel into irreparable fragments. He had been picked up by a charitable trawler and delivered more dead than alive to a hospital established for the purpose. The hospital was also an improvisation. It had been formerly the home of a duchess, and was now a shelter for those hurt souls whom *kultur* casts up from the sea. It stood upon the crest of a hill overlooking a clamorous harbor, and welcomed the victims of Tirpitzian frightfulness.

Lieutenant Bainbridge found it very trying at first, because he wanted to die and the nurses would not let him. There was one dark-eyed nurse in particular—she was evidently a foreigner—who insisted that he live, though he explained to her, very patiently, that a sailor who had lost his ship, and his left arm as well, was far better off underground than above it. To which the little nurse replied, in her careful English, that *she* had lost her country and was still undisheartened.

"If one dies now, Monsieur," she said quietly, "one goes out before the end of the play. And that is not fair to the author."

Later Bainbridge fell desperately in love with the

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dark-eyed nurse; and that was very good for him, because it gave him something to cling to. Under the spell of it he improved rapidly and in a short time was able to stroll about the great terrace overhanging the sea. Occasionally the little nurse would accompany him, and they would talk of the lost country that lay just over the horizon.

One day Bainbridge said: "When I get out of this I am going to ask for another ship."

She looked at him with a quick smile. "I knew that you were too brave to die!"

He laughed a little at that. "Of course," he said, "they won't take a one-armed man in the line; but I may be able to pick up something in the auxiliary service. I'm not altogether helpless, you know."

A fortnight afterward he went up to London to see the powers in charge of the American Naval Arrangements. Early in December he returned to the hospital, still rather gaunt and pale, but boyishly elated over his good fortune.

"They've given me a boat of sorts," he told the dark-eyed nurse. "It's nothing but a discarded experiment with a gun on it; but we cripples can't pick and choose. I'm thankful for small favors."

They were standing at a window overlooking the harbor. Twilight had fallen upon the tangled shipping below, and a huge shadow walked upon the sea. Somewhere in the stillness of that ancient beneficent house arose sudden voices, singing a song as old as England:

> God rest you merry, gentlemen,
> Let nothing you dismay.

"They are practicing the Christmas carols," said the little nurse. "We are going to have a very beautiful Christmas. I wish that you might be here to share it with us."

"I shall think of you," said Bainbridge unsteadily.

"And I of you, Monsieur."

He took her hand and kissed it. A few moments later he went down the unlighted slope that led to the sea.

The United States X 157, an eighty-foot gasoline experiment "with a gun on it," was having engine trouble somewhere off the Irish coast. She should have been probing the waters of a suspected inlet, with others of her breed, some fifty miles to the northward, but an acute attack of motor sickness had interfered materially with these holiday arrangements. She lay now in the trough of a black swell and tinkered her insides, to the unspeakable disgust of her commander—a tall, gaunt young man with an empty sleeve—who had hoped for better things.

It was the day before Christmas, a fact which did not tend to mitigate X 157's misfortune, nor to improve the spirits of her master. Lieutenant Bainbridge, for all his hardening experience, was of an age peculiarly sensitive to imperfection. He paced gloomily up and down his negligible bit of quarter-deck and cursed the luck that had kept him out of the "Christmas show." Except for the unutterable luck, he would have had a speaking part in the performance, which was to result (one hoped) in the elimination of an uncommonly active enemy submarine.

The submarine in question was officially registered as *Unterseeboot U 309;* but to the world at large, and especially to the world that goes upon the face of the waters, she was known simply as the Devil Fish. Her commander, a blond pirate with a gift for slaughter, had endeared himself to humanity by the unusual thoroughness of his *kultur.* Altogether he was a most successful Devil Fish, whom the authorities had striven in vain to abate.

Recently, however, certain rumors had fallen out of the air: rumors concerning a concealed submarine base upon an uninhabited adjacent coast. Whereupon a selected pack of American and British small craft, in charge of a thirty-knot destroyer, had been dispatched to investigate, much in the manner of hounds sent forth to flush a fox. It was to this squadron that X 157 should have belonged.

But X 157 lay wallowing in the lap of wintry seas and

generally cursed the luck. To add to the holiday atmosphere of the scene, the wind spat up a gusty snow, out of the thick of which emerged suddenly a huge blundering bird shape.

"British seaplane off the port bow, sir," called a voice from X 157's frozen foredeck. "Says he wants to talk to us."

"Of course he does," growled Bainbridge; and he added under his breath: "They're a garrulous lot, these wing lieutenants."

Meanwhile the seaplane had come to rest upon the heaving bosom of the waters, and was addressing X 157 with admirable brevity. The gist of her discourse was that a neutral merchantman had been sunk some fifteen miles to the southeast. The plane added quite casually that it was the work of the Devil Fish.

"Are you sure?" demanded X 157 with new eagerness.

"Perfectly sure," answered the plane. "I saw his marks distinctly. He was shelling the remains when I arrived and dropped a few bombs on him. He dived then. The boats have all been harvested by our patrols, so there's nothing in particular to do. Thought you might like to run down and pick up the scent."

"Thanks," returned X 157, "but I've got troubles of my own."

"Sorry to hear it. Hope you get home for Christmas," said the plane politely and, darting up a long swell, fluttered booming away into the distance.

"Cheerful beggar," observed Bainbridge. Then, turning, he perceived the figure of his chief engineer ascending into view. The chief engineer was a most unbeautiful man in greasy overalls, who saluted by knocking the rimed sweat from his forehead.

"Temporary repairs completed, sir. I think that I can get twelve knots out of her."

"I want at least fifteen," said Bainbridge, who a moment since would have been content with steerageway.

The engineer replied that fifteen was possible but unsalutary, and went below with a clear conscience.

Shortly thereafter X 157 swung her sharp nose to the southeast and sped quivering toward the spot where an innocent ship had died. Lieutenant Bainbridge, in the wheelhouse, felt a sudden cheerfulness warm his breast at this unexpected turn of fortune.

"If the luck holds," said he to his second in command, "we may bump into something."

"Amen!" replied the second, a youth of tender years, who had been in the navy since April.

"The Fish is a late-type boat," continued Bainbridge reflectively, "which means that he can stay down a long time without wagging a fin. I'd give odds that he hasn't budged from the scene of the crime."

"The best murderers don't," agreed the second in command; and he bustled forward to see to his shiny three-inch gun, which had never let loose at anything more exhilarating than a canvas target.

For an hour X 157 drove on through ever thickening squalls—real Christmas weather, it would have been called ashore—until she blundered into a small sargasso of wreckage: the remains of the torpedoed merchantman. Then she shut off her motors, lest the throb of the propellers should carry down under, and became a gray ghost drifting in the swish of the blizzard.

It was pure chance; but so are most of the larger adventures of this world, including love and life. The afternoon wore on with infinite suspense. The sea was an oily leviathan with a bad conscience, that moaned and tumbled on its bed. The sky was a crumbling eternity of snow, through which the sun showed from time to time, like a lantern muffled with wet cloths.

There was no certainty in heaven or on earth except the cold wind tossing the colder spray—that and the loaded gun on X 157's foredeck.

Then abruptly the tension snapped. There was a shrill cry from the bridge; a jumble of shouted commands; the shift of muffled figures falling into place; the sudden resumed beat of the motors—followed instantly by a flash and a roar as of the universe being torn apart. Out of the white smother of the storm, out of the tortured breast

of the sea, had come a slimy monster with a curious growth upon its back and the characters "U 309" quite plain upon its dripping sides.

The second in command said afterward that it was the most surprised-looking submarine he had ever encountered. "Up it came, expecting to find everything cheerful as a graveyard. And there *we* were—waiting. The trouble was that it rose directly under our bows, so that I couldn't get the sights on. I saw a man's head sticking out of the conning tower, and I fired at that. But you can't do fancy shooting with a three-inch gun at ten yards. I jarred him though."

The interval immediately following that first shot was one of exquisite agony. To Bainbridge it seemed as though X 157 would *never* answer her wheel. The submarine, meanwhile, had recovered from her natural astonishment and was making desperate efforts to submerge. But fate and the rejuvenated luck were kind. The three-inch gun roared again. This time the shell struck fair and true at the base of the conning tower, lifted it bodily overside and tore a beautiful, gaping hole in the monster's back. Whatever else she might do, the Devil Fish would not dive again.

But the submarine proved to be a creature of considerable resource. Out of the hole in her body, like so many angry hornets, poured her men, each with a rifle in his hand. At the same time there appeared magically upon her afterdeck something long and black and businesslike, which was promptly seized upon by her people and pointed at X 157's exposed flank.

And at that extremely critical moment a blinding tempest of snow dropped like a curtain upon the face of the waters, completely blotting the submarine from view. It was as though she had been made invisible by some satanic legerdemain.

Now, there are precedents for every turn and twist of naval warfare; but the difficulty is that one has not usually the time to consult them. It was no academic adherence to precedent that impelled Lieutenant Bainbridge to issue his next command. It was inspiration pure and

simple, the nameless instinct of a fighting race to get at the vitals of its foe.

"Full speed ahead!"

Immediately X 157 lunged forward through the obliterating drift, quivering in all her parts. The crouched figures grouped about the deck gun braced themselves for the shock. Only the commander seemed to retain his accustomed calm. His directions to the helmsman came in the cool, quiet voice that begets instant obedience:

"Port a little—a little more —— Steady! Hold her there!"

Then, quite as though it had been arranged by some bit of stage trickery, the long black hull of the submarine loomed out of the slavering waters, for all the world like a wounded sea serpent which nevertheless still carried a sting in its tail. There were unidentified shouts, screams, and sudden furious movements among the enemy's gun crew. The next instant, with a ragged cheer from her own people, X 157 drove straight into the hostile firing party, raised her knife-like bows and brought them down with a sickening crash upon U 309's piece of ordnance, which did not go off as planned. In fact it remained securely anchored in X 157's forehold, to the great relief of those concerned.

At this juncture the American boat reverted to a type of attack generally considered obsolete. She decided to board the submarine. Her decision was hastened somewhat by the fact that she had observed the enemy's bow gun being prepared for action.

So Lieutenant Bainbridge gave the order and, drawing his automatic, jumped to the U-boat's icy deck. He was followed by most of the crew, armed with rifles and other weapons, some of which are not prescribed in the regulations. The second in command unlimbered X 157's only machine gun and, joyfully assisted by the helmsman, played a stream of lead upon the enemy's forequarters, which immediately ceased to be dangerous.

The picture is one for the brush rather than for the pen. The two boats at death grip, locked together by a four-point-seven gun which ever and anon some inspired

foeman attempts to explode; the white heavens crumbling down, as though to hide the spectacle of man attacking man; the black water lathering alongside, or foaming over the slippery deck; the sun like a guttering lantern, swung so the gods might see the crackle of rifle fire; the little stabs of flame; the sudden apparition of X 157's men pouring over her crumpled bows; the cries, the shouts, the clash of weapons—all roaring and revolving about the person of a one-armed man who strode through literal hell unscathed!

Him the enemy saw outlined against the pale light, a grim figure with a vivid face, who lived among the lightning flashes as a mountain lives above the storm. How rank should discover rank in that hurly-burly of struggling forms is something of a mystery, but the fact remains that Lieutenant Bainbridge and the German commander met upon that precarious deck, awash with foaming seas.

Bainbridge's automatic had long since spat out its contents. The other apparently had several shots left. He came lunging and slipping toward the American, his big, round face luminous with rage, his close-clipped blond hair bristling furiously above his pale brow. Raising his arm, he was about to fire pointblank at Bainbridge, when a clubbed rifle, swung from behind, knocked the revolver from his hand. Whereupon the two commanders were left standing face to face, with no weapons but those which nature had provided them.

At this point let us again quote the second in command, who observed the ensuing incident from X 157's wheelhouse, where he had remained for purposes of selective sniping:

"The skipper was immense. Simply immense. He stepped in with a hard right to the jaw, and Fritz dropped like a log. Poor Fritz! He was lost without his little popgun. He didn't know how to use his hands. He just stood there with his eyes bulging out of his head and waited for developments. Then the skipper dropped him and the show was over."

The show was indeed over. That one blow, with bare

fist, had settled the whole grim business. The surviving Germans came forward and surrendered. They were disarmed and shepherded aboard X 157. As for the gentleman who did not know how to use his hands, he was revived and placed for his health in the skipper's cabin, where a guard attended him.

These things having been accomplished, as Cæsar would say, X 157 looked about to see what damage had been done and how much of it was reparable. She found her entire forehold in splinters, but she remedied this by closing the forward bulkhead. Subsequently she backed clear of the foe, only to discover that a seam had opened up amidships. So she stuffed the leak with cotton waste and other things and, by means of earnest pumping, contrived to keep afloat.

But she was not content with the mere rudiments of navigation. Finding that her motors were more or less intact, she decided to tow the submarine. So she set off, with the Devil Fish sloughing behind her and the lash of a holiday blizzard whipping overhead. Eight knots to the hour and the pumps going continuously! Along toward six o'clock she met a British destroyer, who thought that she was dying and who offered to take her prize in charge.

"Not much," wirelessed X 157 in reply; "I'll carry my own Christmas presents home!"

In the gay dawn of a most holy Christian Day a crippled boat came limping into a clamorous harbor, and delivered her Gift to the authorities. A few hours later the civilized world, and doubtless the uncivilized as well, knew that the famous Devil Fish had been captured, for even the rigors of a wartime censorship could not suppress *that* bit of history. London and Washington exchanged congratulatory cablegrams, and before nightfall Lieutenant Bainbridge, U. S. N., had received Christmas greetings from a king.

But it was not the telegram from royalty that made Lieutenant Bainbridge's day complete. It was something ineffably more precious; something that looked out of the eyes of the little nurse as she welcomed him "home."

He had gone up to the hospital on the hill, and had found her arranging a tree for the wounded. It was a very modest tree, with candles saved over from last year, but it cast a peculiar radiance upon the face of the little nurse. "I prayed that you would be returned to us, Monsieur," she said.

"Well, here I am," replied Bainbridge with a confused laugh.

Then the room filled up with a crowd of joyous shattered humans—the lame, the halt and the blind!—who greeted Bainbridge with frivolous applause and proceeded to go into ecstasies of admiration over the tree.

Hours later Bainbridge and the little nurse went out upon the terrace to look at the stars, which are the street lamps of heaven; and a choir of light-hearted convalescents sang Christmas carols for their exclusive benefit.

And the little nurse cried because, as she explained, it was so altogether beautiful.

"Oh, Monsieur," she said, "there is so much to be thankful for, even now. Sometimes I feel that in losing my country I have gained . . . the whole world!"

But Bainbridge was looking with proprietary interest at the stars.

*"Red, White and Blue"

By Dana Burnet

It was the evening of July third. Lieutenant James Loring, of the Franco-American Escadrille, was flying peacefully homeward through the golden haze of twilight. Far below him, a brown scar ran unevenly across the earth's surface, broken here and there by curious dark splotches. The brown scar was the German Front Line and the dark splotches were ruined French villages.

Four black clouds, each with a white lightning in its heart, burst suddenly across the young aviator's path. At the same time the plane veered like a shying horse. Loring pushed his "stick" far forward; dropped a thousand feet sheer; flattened out, and continued his peaceful homeward flight.

"Some day," he promised himself, "I'm going down and chastise that particular boche battery. But not till I've had my little Fourth of July celebration!"

He smiled as he thought of the note that he had just dropped behind the German trenches. The note, attached to a steel dart and released at a point where it was certain to be observed, had been addressed to "Captain Heidemann, Imperial Flying Corps, German Army, France." It contained a challenge to Heidemann, a famous enemy Ace, to meet Lieutenant Loring at eight o'clock the next morning in an air duel above the German lines. Loring's machine was to be distinguished by the American colors. The fact that such a duel could end only in the death of one of the contestants did not trouble the youthful challenger.

"It's going to be a real, old-fashioned Fourth," he re-

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flected, grimly, as he climbed high above the line of descending French sausage balloons. "Hope I can dig up a flag somewhere——"

The problem of securing his flag was the one detail of the affair that concerned him. However, there were numerous American flags in the little village that served as headquarters for the escadrille; he had seen them coloring the shop windows for months—ever since the United States had declared war.

The golden tints faded swiftly out of the evening sky. A gray vapor began to shroud the earth beneath him; a thick, obliterating mist that wiped away the last illusion of a world already grown dim. . . . Familiar landmarks melted into the fog. Bald-headed hills, clumps of wood stripped naked by the iron storm, sank into oblivion. Nevertheless, as long as he carried the friendly roar of the motor in his ears, he had no doubt of his ability to get home.

Precisely at that moment the friendly roar changed to a spasmodic outburst of staccato explosions, followed instantly by a deafening silence. The motor had stopped.

Immediately Loring tilted his plane forward; began to soar down in long sweeping circles that brought him rapidly earthward. A dark patch appeared in the gray haze below him; he skimmed like a frightened swallow over the top of a ghastly little wood, made one last swoop, lifted the nose of his machine and ran bumping along the shell-torn ground.

He had landed in a field surrounded on three sides by the bleaching skeleton of a dead forest; the trees towered white and terrible in the gloom, like some infernal planting of bones. At the far end of the field stood the remains of a tiny village whose tragic profile was outlined plainly against the darkening sky.

Loring knew that this section of the front had been recently fought over. Only forty-eight hours earlier he had taken part in the attack that had wrested a few kilometers of it from the Germans. Climbing down from his machine he made his way toward the ruined village, expecting to find it occupied by a French patrol.

As he drew nearer he perceived one house that still possessed its roof. The other houses were mere broken fragments waiting to be swallowed by the mud. It was no new sight to Loring; he had witnessed hundreds of such villages strewing the charnel fields of France. Nevertheless, he shuddered. There was a peculiar silence, a peculiar sombreness upon this village.

Apparently, too, it was quite deserted. He walked up to the door of the single remaining house, which was no more than a hollow shell, and thrust in his head. A woman was sitting on a pile of rubbish, laughing quietly to herself. . . .

She was a young woman with snow-white hair, and she laughed as though at some jest that would never be done. Her face, despite the heavy lines of suffering carved upon it, still had the smooth contours of youth. There was a smoldering madness in her eyes.

When she saw the aviator standing in the doorway she sprang up with a despairing cry. *"Vous êtes venu chercher mes morts! Alors, je vous dis, vous ne les trouverez jamais!"*

The young American, who could stake his life as carelessly as a street gamin flips a penny, who was prepared at any moment to play double or quits with death, felt his blood run cold. Then he realized the woman's plight, and an immediate pity surged over him. In voluble slipshod French he strove to reassure her as to his presence; but she shrank away from him.

"You have an accent!" she said.

Loring nodded.

"I am an American."

At once the woman's expression changed to one of awed curiosity. She came forward, and touched him timidly with her hand.

"An American!" she repeated. "An American! They said that you would never come."

"They lied," said Loring.

The woman continued to look at him.

"It is well that you have come. There are so many of those boches ——"

Loring made a gesture.

"Tell me," he said; "are there no French soldiers here—no officers?"

"I do not know. I have been hiding ever since the bombardment." She passed her hand across her face. "Two—three days. The boches took all those of us who were young. The rest of us—I am one of the old ones now—they told to go into the houses. Then they went away, and by and by the shells began to fall: *boom! boom!* Many were killed—I can see them now, tumbling over like puppets in the Punch and Judy show! But I was clever. I hid—I will not tell you where! This morning I came out . . . to laugh."

A sudden weakness seized her; she put out one hand and caught his sleeve.

"I am very hungry," she murmured; then, gripping his arm, she said: "If you are truly an American, you must have brought food!"

A grim smile passed over the young aviator's face.

Fumbling through his pockets, he found his emergency rations, consisting of some bread and cheese. With his clasp-knife he cut this modest provender into small portions, which he gave piecemeal to the woman, saving only a few mouthfuls for himself. Finally he produced his wine flask and held it to her lips. She took a long draught; then drew back, wiping her mouth with her hand.

"Ah, but that was good!" she said. "Now I can sit down and laugh for a long time."

"Why do you laugh?" asked Loring gently.

"Because it is such an excellent joke, Monsieur—a joke on the boches. They said to me, long ago—when my hair was brown—that they would leave nothing in the village, not so much as a saucepan! Well, Monsieur, they did their best—and they are very clever at such things, those boches!—but I was cleverer than they. Look, Monsieur!"

She stopped, and turned up the edge of her skirt.

There, thrust into the hem of it, was an ordinary housewife's needle.

"See!" she said. "They did not get my needle. That's what I call a good joke on the boches ——"

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Loring.

"More than that, Monsieur, I saved almost a whole candle. It is buried in the rubbish there. But I have no matches ——"

"I have a briquet," said Loring.

"Is it the kind of briquet that makes a flame?"

"Yes."

"Then I will dig up the candle, and we will have a light. It is a long time since I have seen a candle burn, and the night is coming on."

Dropping to her knees, she thrust her fingers into the pile of debris, and drew forth a tallow candle. Loring applied his precious briquet to the wick, and soon a feeble radiance was struggling with the great shadow that filled the world.

"Name of God," said the woman, "but that is very gay!" And she began to laugh.

Loring placed his hand upon her shoulder.

"You must not laugh," he said.

"*Eh bien,* Monsieur, I will weep if you prefer it. I can do either."

"No, no! You must think. You must try to help me ——"

"Who are you, Monsieur? I have forgotten ——"

"I am an aviator," said Loring, speaking slowly and distinctly. "I have met with misfortune. Look, there is my machine in the field there."

"Ah!" said the woman. "You are one of those angels of death, then! I used to see them on clear days, flying over the village with the little circles under their wings."

"To-morrow," said Loring, "I will fly over the German lines to fight a certain boche aviator. I have challenged him. It is necessary to my honor, it is necessary to the honor of my country that I meet him at the appointed time."

"But if you have had an accident ——?"

"That is just it! That is why I must find help. Come,

Madame, you must tell me where the French are. Try to remember!"

The woman shook her head.

"I remember nothing but the bombardment, which still goes in my ears. That, and the faces of my dead . . ."

She sank down upon the rubbish heap in a veritable daze. Loring knelt beside her; took her hands in his.

"You must help me," he said. "To-morrow is my *fête* day, the day when all good Americans celebrate the anniversary of their freedom! I am going to fight the boche in honor of the event! I am going to get an American flag, and fasten it to the wires of my machine ——"

The woman smiled delightedly.

"That will be splendid," she said, "to fly your flag in the boche's face!"

"But you see," concluded Loring, "unless I can get into touch with my command, I shall never obtain my flag."

A vague sympathy showed in the woman's eyes.

"I will make you a flag, Monsieur. I have my needle. And what is a flag, when you think of it? A thing to wave in the wind, a thing to hang out of windows, a thing to dream of, to die for, yes! But after all, a thing of cloth; a thing of colored fabrics sewed together. What are the colors of your flag, Monsieur?"

"Red, white and blue," responded Loring, mechanically. He was wondering what the chances would be of finding a French patrol. Would it be worth the risk to go stumbling about in the dark? He might get a bullet through his head; or he might end up in the German trenches. Such things had been known to happen; and the new local offensive had twisted the lines about like old wire. Would it not be better to wait until daybreak?

"I will make a flag, Monsieur."

"What do you say?"

For reply, the woman took a charred stick from the pile of débris and gave it to Loring. She then swept back some of the litter at her feet.

"Draw there for me the plan of your flag," she said, "and I will make it according to the pattern."

"The devil!" said Loring, helplessly. But he accepted the stick nevertheless, and drew upon the naked floor a rough design of the Stars and Stripes, pausing frequently to blacken the point of the stick in the candle's flame. The alternate stripes he marked "rouge," "blanc," "rouge," "blanc," and indicated by little crosses the field of stars.

"That is very plain," said the woman, staring down at the floor, "and I am very clever with my needle. You shall see. As for the thread, I can take a raveling from my skirt."

"But you have no cloth!"

She smiled her vague and tremulous smile.

"God will provide the cloth," she said.

Loring felt absurdly disappointed. He had forgotten for a moment that he was dealing with a mad woman. . . .

He turned and strode to the doorway; looked out into the darkness of the summer night. The air was shaken by the continual rumble of artillery. In the distance he could see the red flashes of the guns, and occasionally the high curving burst of a star-shell, hanging like a long-stemmed flower on the night. From somewhere across the desolate waste of No Man's Land came the brisk chatter of a machine gun, running on like gossip at a grave. Once he heard the whine of shrapnel in the air, that "sound of the devil spitting through his teeth," and then the machine guns again. He drew back with a shrug of resignation.

"No use wandering about in that hell's desert," he muttered. Then addressing the woman he said courteously: "Madame, will you permit me to spend the night beneath your roof?"

"Willingly, Monsieur," she replied. "But I warn you, there are holes in it."

"One is lucky to have any kind of roof these days," said Loring. "I will take this corner here, if it is not your own sleeping place?"

"I never sleep, Monsieur. For when one sleeps, one dreams, and that is very terrible."

Loring looked at her in grim silence. Then, realizing that the situation was quite beyond control, and that there was nothing to be done until morning, went promptly to sleep.

The woman waited until she heard him breathing regularly. She then crept to his side, stooped down and with careful fingers drew from his pocket the knife that he had used to cut the bread and cheese. Opening it, she ran her thumb along the blade.

"Ah," she whispered, "that is a good, sharp knife."

Rising, she took up the candle, and guarding the flame with her hand, glided like a shadow toward the rear of the ruined house. There was a little fantastic dance of shadows upon the broken ceiling; boards creaked; then the light disappeared.

Loring awoke to a sense of strangeness, of profound unreality that he could not at first overcome. He lay upon his back and stared up at the gray heavens revealed through a shell-hole in the roof. It was early morning.

He turned his head and saw the young woman with the snow-white hair seated upon the floor sewing by the light of a flickering candle. Her attitude was that of one who performs some solemn religious rite. Her head was bowed. Her needle rose and fell with a sort of unearthly rhythm, as slowly, as inexorably as the weaving shuttles of Fate. Across her knees lay an unmistakable replica of the American flag.

It was clearly an improvisation. The cloths of which it was made were faded and soiled; the stripes were too few; the stars were a random constellation. Yet Loring, gazing at it in bewilderment, had the feeling that he was beholding one of earth's supreme symbols.

He got dazedly to his feet.

"You have worked a miracle, Madame!"

The woman raised her eyes to his. She was deathly pale, and there was a certain tragic frailty in her voice. She spoke with simple directness, too, as though she had

passed through suffering to some high sanity of the soul.

"No, Monsieur, it is not a miracle. It is only the strange fruit of circumstance. I said that God would provide you with a flag, but it was not God, Monsieur; it was Death!"

The young American bent down and scanned closely the woman's handiwork.

"Where did you get the material?" he asked.

She regarded him for a moment impassively. Then, with a calm, conclusive gesture she broke off her thread, placed the flag over her left arm, and taking up the candle, rose to her feet.

"You will fight better if I show you," she said. "Come with me, Monsieur."

She led him into a back room that had once been the kitchen of the house, and brushing aside the rubbish with her foot, disclosed a trap-door which she bade him open. He did so, and perceived a flight of steps leading down into semi-darkness.

"I will go first," said the woman.

Loring followed her down the steps. It was like descending into a tomb. There was a chill dampness in the air, and the odor was that of a grave.

The tremulous yellow light of the candle revealed a cellar eight or ten feet square, the walls of which were covered by a glistening sweat. Upon the mud floor of this subterranean chamber lay three corpses: the bodies of an old man, an old woman, and a child.

"Here are my dead," said the woman, in a voice without emotion, and proceeded with the awful introduction: *"Ma mère, mon père, et mon petit enfant."*

Loring looked at the three still forms; then turned and stared with sudden comprehension at the flag which the woman held in her hand.

"I understand," he said slowly; and indeed the thing was apparent enough. A single glance sufficed to show where the woman had got her cloths.

The blouse of the old man had been a faded blue. There was a square patch cut out of it, just over the

heart. The old woman had worn a red skirt. It was in ribbons. The child had been covered with a white cloth. That, too, was hacked and cut. . . .

"Good God!" exclaimed Loring, as full realization of the circumstances struck him.

The woman smiled.

"Did I not say that Death——?" she began. But suddenly her voice failed her. The stump of a candle slipped from her hand to the floor, leaving the room gray with the light of morning. Gray, too, was the woman's face as she stood leaning against the wall, with the smile dying on her lips, and a certain childlike wonder dawning in her eyes.

Summoning the last vestige of her strength she held out to him the flag.

"Take it, Monsieur," she said. "I have made it for your *fête* day." Then her eyes closed. "I think that I am going to sleep, after all. . . . Pray for me, Monsieur. . . . Pray that I do not . . . dream."

She swayed toward him. He caught her in his arms and lowered her gently to the floor. For a moment he remained thus bending over her; then straightened up, with the flag that she had made for him clenched in his hand.

"God—damn—them!" he said. . . .

He was smiling as he reached the open air. It was good to be alive, good to be young and vigorous; good to realize that the enemy you desired to kill eminently deserved killing! He knew, as he strode across the pock-marked field toward the machine that stood waiting there, that he would meet Heidemann; knew also that he would slay or be slain.

So he was not surprised when, upon lifting the hood of the motor, the cause of the difficulty almost immediately manifested itself. A bit of shrapnel, hurled at him the night before by the German "archies," had struck the main feed wire, cutting the insulation eventually, causing the wire to snap. Five minutes' work repaired the damage.

He then fastened the woman's flag to one of the stays

of his machine, saluted it briskly and seized the propeller blade. The task of cranking up was one of heroic proportions, but he managed it somehow. After twenty minutes of unremitting labor the motor came thunderously to life. The plane lunged awkwardly toward him. He sprang up on the lower wing, clambered desperately into the pilot's seat and grasped the steering-lever.

The sound of the motor became a steady, heartening roar. The plane sped rocking across the uneven ground; soared suddenly into the air. The flag at its wing-tip stood out in momentary boldness, revealing to an unobservant world its quaint stars and stripes.

The sun rose above the desolated wood.

The official communiqué of the French Army devoted three sentences to that duel in the air. The correspondents spun it out to a column. What History will say of it is still a matter of conjecture, because History, despite wireless, dictaphones and the typewriter, has not been able to keep pace with the War. Poor History! What a fearful lot of copy she will have to turn out between now and press-time!

It was just eight o'clock when Lieutenant Loring crossed the German lines. A few moments later he perceived an enemy machine flying toward him. He recognized it by the peculiar dragon-shaped body as Heidemann's.

At once both aviators began to climb. Half a mile below, the German anti-aircraft gun crew that had been spraying the sky with shrapnel, stood with phlegmatic faces turned heavenward, waiting for their champion to down this presumptuous foe, who carried only a wisp of bunting on his wing-tip to distinguish him!

Heidemann, the Dragon Fly, is over him now. A mighty swoop, a quick stab of the lightning that he knows so well how to employ. . . . Ah, there he goes! But no, Wisp of Bunting drops fluttering, a straight nose-dive that brings him suddenly into plain focus. Dragon-Fly comes plunging after him, with sharp chatter of steel, rat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

Well, he has got him that time! Wisp of Bunting

slips off sidewise, like a wounded duck; turns reeling toward his own lines. Dragon-Fly circles above him, seems to pause in mid-career, then darts down for the final accounting.

At the same moment Wisp of Bunting shoots dizzily upward, performs a rapid loop and in the twinkling of an eye, by a sort of aerial legerdemain, has reversed positions with his adversary. Instantly he seizes the advantage; points the nose of his machine swiftly downward; presses the firing-button upon the top of his steering-lever.

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

Dragon-Fly hangs drunkenly in air, then dips forward and plunges crashing to earth in the sight of two armies.

That night, in a certain village behind the French lines, there was given a dinner for the American members of the escadrille. It was a real Fourth of July dinner, with appropriate embellishments and yards of patriotic bunting. But in the place of honor, over the picture of Washington on the mess-room wall, hung Lieutenant Loring's droll little flag. . . .

Lieutenant Loring himself was present, and was requested to make a speech, which he indignantly refused to do.

But a famous French General, who had been invited to dine with the mess, rose and said:

"In all the world to-night there is no worthier symbol of freedom than that flag upon your wall there. In saluting it, I salute not only the colors of America, but of France as well. Nay, more, I salute the very garments of her dead. Messieurs! Let us drink to the red, the white, and the blue. *A la victoire!*"

The mess surged to its feet, with deep responsive voices, and the chorus went thundering out into the night ——

"A la victoire!"

*Underseaboat F-33

By Donn Byrne

She had slipped out of the mouth of the Elbe that morning—two hundred feet of sinister dull metal—past a forest of shipping, schooners, barks, barkentines, tramp steamers, passenger liners: past the lugubrious, futile line of men-of-war, caught in the harbor, like rats in a corner, and had punched her way into the snapping swell of the North Sea. Three hours out, fifty miles, the bridge had caught sight of the grim, waiting line of British battleships, squat, ugly, efficient, with thin tendrils of smoke floating dreamily from their stacks, like tobacco fumes from the pipe of an idler. She had dived instantaneously to sixty feet, and slipped cautiously past, hugging the shore. The officers of the bridge had mopped wet foreheads and laughed short, uneasy laughs of relief when she rose in safety twenty miles farther out. In that two hours and a half's submersion they had trusted blindly to Fate against sudden death. For even at sixty feet beneath the battle line there were dangers—mines cunningly balanced and vast, powerful steel nets—incredible, horrible things.

She was out of danger and a clear sea before her, Schroeder said to himself as he leaned over the rail of the collapsible bridge, six feet two of clean bone and sinew. The lean Bavarian quartermaster at the wheel looked at him with eyes eloquent with admiration, taking in his square, fighter's head: the closely cropped blond hair showing beneath the commander's cap; the heavy, clefted chin; the firm, thin mouth; the high cheek-bones; half-closed grayish-blue eyes; the bull's neck. The quar-

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termaster looked at his hands as they held on to the rail, two great square, brown things. He shivered a little as he thought of those at his throat.

The commander drew himself up slowly, with the deliberate movement of a big animal, and began pacing the deck. He took in the fifteen feet of it in five easy strides. The submarine was cutting into her course like a racing-yacht. A long, thin angle of white foam broke over her bow, slapping her steel sides with a flat, metallic sound that suggested wood striking iron. Spray boiled over the free-board and curled sinuously about the bridge. The staccato cough of the gasoline exhaust cut into the air with a monotonous rasp.

Schroeder stopped in stride and glanced at the compass.

"Northwest by north," he read.

"Northwest by north it is, sir," the quartermaster chimed in.

Schroeder's eye brightened as he looked about. All around him, like a vast gray plain, the North Sea stretched. The submarine's dull brown against the blue of the nearer water suggested a lone porpoise driving onward. There was an air of efficiency about everything that appealed to Schroder. The sharp, metallic lines of the two periscopes, standing up like bare trees on a desolate moorland; the giant rivets on the deck; the lines of the wireless rigging; the bridge that could be taken apart and brought below in a minute and a half—compass, chronometer, and wheel; the delicate, flowing line of the great sea-harrier; the bulge of the hidden nine-pounder aft; the sinewy quartermaster, bent over the horizontal wheel like a chauffeur over the steering-gear of an automobile—all gave him a sense of power, of confidence in man's strength and ability, that sent his pulse beating and his eye gleaming with pride. To put to sea in a mere husk of steel, to appear and disappear at will, to deal death by mere pressure of a button, and all this the result of the gray matter that is in every man's skull—that was life, he said, that was triumph!

He raised his sea-glasses and swept the gray line of

horizon deliberately, searchingly. It seemed all one vast expanse of nothingness. Very dimly on the west he thought he could distinguish a speck of brown sail—some adventurous fisherman trawling for mackerel. But as yet nothing for him. He had been detailed to watch the Norwegian lane for contraband. Supplies were coming into Havre with regularity that came neither down the Baltic nor across from America. The grim, iron-fisted policy that made the English Channel a nightmare of horror was having its effect. Atlantic travel had all but stopped, but there was still a formidable leak. May had come and the ice had broken in Archangel harbor. A shrewd intelligence officer suggested that Russian vessels were skirting the Scandinavian coast and creeping southward, laden to the scuppers with supplies. It was Schroeder's task to reconnoitre and if possible to deal a stiff lesson. There were rumors too of Danish, and Swedish, and Norwegian skippers who didn't mind running the blockade for the adventure and the money in it. He had been given his own discretion how to act in cases not covered by his instructions. He knew how, he nodded to himself grimly, and his mouth twisted—he knew.

Somewhere below six muffled tinkles rang out. It was seven o'clock. There was the trickle of a musical-comedy bar being whistled, and the first lieutenant, a lithe, wiry Saxon, with black hair and flashing black eyes, appeared through the manhole. He made his way forward.

"Is that you, Halbrandt?"

"Yes, sir."

"Has the wireless got anything?"

"Not a thing, sir."

The commander handed over the glasses.

"I think I'll let you take watch now," he said, in his snappy, clean-cut tones. "Keep her off a couple of points, and don't take your eye off the sky-line for a moment. I'm going to turn in. The moment anything appears let me know."

"All right, sir."

Schroeder took a last look before he left the bridge.

The bow still cut its flurry of foam. A wind had sprung up, and was whining through the wireless rigging. The vast desert of gray flowed off on all sides. There was a pale, hazy red smudge in the west—the setting sun.

Dawn broke—a faint flurry of pink and mauve. The sun flashed up in a great disk of polished brass. The plain of the sea extended green to the right and left, quivering, nervous, with caps of white foam like patches of snow on grass. A keen salt wind blew southward. Overhead a gull hovered like an aeroplane. A bunch of brown seaweed floated past. The submarine cut into the waves like a knife, the sunlight making flashes of rainbow through the foam of the bow.

The navigating lieutenant turned to Schroeder.

"She's doing good time," he said.

"She'll be doing something else besides good time," the commander grinned, "if there's any luck at all. Submarines aren't built for racing; fighting's their best suit."

Hours passed, marked by the tinkle of the bells below. The watch changed. The sun mounted upward and beat down perpendicularly. The rolling swell of the Doggerbank caught and lifted them slowly and measuredly like the rocking of a cradle. The commander still kept to the bridge, scanning the horizon through his bulging sea-glasses. He handed them to the officer of the watch.

"Take a look to starboard. See anything?" he asked.

The officer of the watch, a thin, fair-haired boy, handed them back.

"It looks like smoke," he answered.

A faint brownish wisp, like the fleece of a cloud, hung off the sky-line. The submarine flashed ahead, the hollow cough of the exhaust rattling out its staccato routine. The wisp on the horizon grew more distinct. It resolved itself into two thin trickles of brown. Schroeder swung about on his heel.

"East-northeast," he snapped to the quartermaster at the wheel; "keep her off. Port a bit. A bit more. Steady! Steady!"

The bow of the submarine swung around in a segment of foam. Schroeder shut his glasses with a click.

"Clear the decks," he rasped.

The officer of the watch raised his whistle to his lips. It cut into the air in three shrill blasts. Blue-bloused forms swung up the manhole steps, swung onto the iron deck, and scurried forward. Quartermasters issued short, crisp orders. There was the whine of ropes through pulleys. Locks clicked. Compass, chronometer, and muffled search-light disappeared like a conjurer's trick. Somewhere a bell rang out a brazen signal.

"All below," Schroeder ordered.

The shield of the manhole shut to with a hollow clang. Below was a narrow passage of steel, lighted at intervals with electric bulbs. Great veins of wiring passed along the walls—huge, ungainly things. Schroeder bent his six feet two as he picked his way along the metal passage toward the conning-tower. At intervals doors opened in the alley, like the staterooms of a liner. On each side little cubby-holes of alcoves showed, marvels of compactness and inch-saving; the quarters of the officers and crew, long, inadequate things, with bunks lining them like rows of shelves; pantries; the galley, with its cunning electric devices for cooking; the arsenal, with the flashing colonnades of rifles caught to the wall; storerooms; lockers. He turned and made one last round before submersion. He passed through the engine-room, where the mechanics pottered around the giant oil-engines; through the storage-batteries, where lean electricians in brown jumpers passed from jar to jar with the eyes of hawks. He walked forward to the torpedo-chamber in the bow, with its arc light throwing dim blue-and-black shadows among the flashing steel capsules that held the deadly projectiles. The torpedo lieutenant stepped forward to meet him.

"All shipshape here, sir," the lieutenant reported.

"All seven in order?" Schroeder asked.

"Every one ready. Gyroscopes fitted and air connections made."

The commander picked his way out through the lines

of steel tubing that led to the compressed-air chambers. He stepped through the torpedo-storeroom, where a gunner was making a tally of material; through the operating-room, with its walls covered by a bewildering series of wiring, of coils, transformers, gauges, wheels, levers, and clutches, the whole making a grotesque mechanical puzzle that seemed past human brains to solve. The engineer lieutenant passed from one gauge to another. His mate pored over a blue-print. Schroeder swung out into the alley again, and clambered up the ladder to the conning-tower. He turned to the helmsman sitting with his eye to the periscope.

"Mark for the smoke to starboard," he directed. "Have you got it?"

"Ready, sir."

Schroeder reached for the lever of the signal-box. It came back with a click to half-speed ahead. There was the high, whining whir of a motor being started. The iron frame of the submarine began to vibrate with a nervous pulsing movement. There was the tang of oil in the air. The commander picked the telephone receiver from the wall.

"Open tanks 2 and 5, port and starboard," he ordered.

There was a slight wallow from right to left and back again. The whir of the motors became a throaty rumble.

"Drop the diving-planes. Seven degrees," he directed the helmsman.

Water rose above the line of square port-holes in a muddy, yellow haze. Prisms and rainbows of refracted sunlight glowed through them for a moment in coarse, broad colors. The helmsman notched his plane-lever with a click, and a blank wall of blue showed before the windows, that shaded off gradually into a misty bog of green.

Schroeder glanced about the flattened cylinder of the conning-tower, at the automobile wheel of the helmsman, at the heavy plane-lever; at the shining brass of the compass, chronometer, spirit-level, and depth gauge; at the black enamel of the telephone. From above, the steel tubes of the periscope jutted downward like rods. He

watched the needle of the gauge creep around to fifty feet.

"Even keel," he ordered. He jerked the lever of the signal-box. "Full speed ahead."

The bow of the submarine rose slowly and steadied. The hum of the motors became a high, jarring roar. The platform of the conning-tower vibrated like the skin of a drum. Little nervous shivers passed from the floor into the bodies of the commander and the helmsman and set their fingers aquiver. Oil floated through the air in infinitesimal particles, like the odor of machine-works. The minute-hand of the chronometer moved twenty times, moved thirty, forty, fifty. The commander turned to the man at the wheel.

"Planes up," he ordered. "Easy on. Three degrees. Steady on."

The floor tilted upward. The blue of the water outside the port-holes changed gradually to a dark green, became lighter, had a tinge of yellow in it.

"Even keel," Schroeder said.

He bent forward and put his eyes to the lens of the periscope. A great expanse of blue water met his eye. He turned the gun-metal crank easily. The periscope revolved. Slowly, like an apparition moving across a biograph screen, the bow, the midships, the stern of a liner crept into view. Two thousand yards away the two black smoke-stacks, the masts, rigging, decks, bridge, and boats hove up vaguely as through a mist. Along her sides he could distinguish a name painted in giant letters.

"Starboard," he directed the quartermaster. "More. More. Hold her there."

The liner drew closer as the submarine forced her way toward it. It seemed as if the steamer were being drawn forward by invisible ropes. On the bridge Schroeder could see the figures of the officers like tiny wooden people on a child's toy. Little by little the great white letters took form.

"The *Olaf Horsa,* of Christiania," Schroeder read. He reached for the signaling lever and rang for half speed. "Bring her up awash," he commanded.

The prisms of light showed through the port-holes as the conning-tower rose above water. The motors slowed in their whining note. The commander picked up the telephone again.

"Notify wireless," he ordered, "that there's a steamer to starboard. Let him signal her to lay to, and to seal her Marconi key. Empty ballast tanks. Pipe gun crew on deck. Stand by in torpedo-room. Go slow. Go dead slow. Stop."

He stepped out of the conning-tower, and into the steel alleyway. Bluejackets dodged past on their way above or to the torpedo-room. Somewhere a whistle piped shrilly. He picked his steps up the manhole ladder, unhooking the megaphone from its catch as he went.

Three hundred yards away the big steamer rolled to the waves like a pendulum. Her bulk stood out like a great house in a flat country. Schroeder could see the group of gesticulating officers crowd together on the edge of the bridge. Along the shelter and saloon decks figures leaned over the railing and gaped at the submarine with distended, frightened eyes—stewards, passengers, seamen. Groups collected about the boat-deck and huddled together as if in fear. Other figures went through weird motions, like a calisthenic drill. They were tying on life-belts. Schroeder raised the megaphone to his lips.

"What ship is this?" he shouted.

Faintly and thinly the reply trickled in to him, like the spent echo of a drum.

"The *Olaf Horsa,* Christiania; Janssen, master."

"Where are you bound?"

"Bound for Southampton."

"What have you on board?"

"Passengers—for trans-shipment to Liverpool."

"What is your cargo?"

There was a brief consultation on the bridge. Schroeder could see the officers argue together heatedly. The reply came in a faint monosyllable.

"Grain."

Schroeder turned around. Amidships the disappearing

gun had been raised from its miniature pit. The sun blazed on its steel surface as on a mirror.

"Give me the telephone," he asked.

A bluejacket handed him the instrument with its length of trailing gray wire.

"Go slow," he ordered. "Stand by in torpedo-room." He turned to the helmsman at the newly fitted jury-wheel.

"Bring her about," he snapped. The bow of the submarine came around until it pointed directly at the liner. "Steady. Dead slow. Stop." He raised the megaphone. His voice rasped like the buzz of a saw.

"Ahoy, *Olaf Horsa!* You have ten minutes to take to your boats."

The groups on the boat-deck gathered closer. Schroeder could see the officers stand like men transformed to stone. A figure detached itself from the group. Schroeder raised his glasses. The figure walked to the rail, shrugged its shoulders, leaned over, and spat in the direction of the submarine. It walked back, its arms folded. Schroeder's voice took on a note of rage.

"Do you hear? Ten minutes," he megaphoned.

An officer swung down the companionway of the bridge, and hurried aft. There was the ragged pipe of a bo's'n's whistle. Men ran to and fro along the decks. Figures gesticulated. A knot of people swayed and fought together on the shelter-deck. Some one jumped overboard, fell in a curve, and struck the water with a faint white splash. The wind brought tendrils of conversation, guttural, angry, appealing.

"One minute gone," Schroeder marked.

The boat-deck of the vessel swarmed with people like a hive with bees. They crowded about the smoke-stacks, and fought their way to the white bulk of the boats. They swayed and turned and seethed. The men at the crooks of the davits worked like maniacs.

"Four minutes gone," the commander said.

The aft starboard boat came downward slowly, the oarsmen pushing against the side of the vessel to keep from striking. Schroeder could see the colors of

women's clothes in the bow. It struck the water with a faint splash. The forward boat dropped with a run and struck half-way toward the surface. It swayed to and fro. There was a faint scream as three figures stood up, tottered, lurched, and fell overboard.

A hail from the ship came indistinctly across.

"The forward port boat is stuck. The other won't hold all. Give us some time."

"You have got five minutes left," Schroeder bellowed.

The boat in the water began pulling frenziedly away from the ship. Men and women sprang from the one in mid-air, like little black objects being thrown into the water. Figures jumped from the decks and hurtled through the air like sacks. In the distance a woman began screaming, a high, piercing wail like the wind through rigging. Again the voice came from the bridge, hysterical, babbling, indistinct.

"Can't you see, damn you . . . impossible . . . a little sense . . . mercy, then. These people . . . seven hundred miles from land. How, in God's name . . ."

Schroeder's heavy shoulders lifted. He turned aside and watched the second-hand of the chronometer pivot jerkily around the dial. The first lieutenant touched him on the arm.

"Look at the bridge," he said.

Schroeder raised his glasses. The officers of the liner seemed to be fighting together. He looked again with fresh interest. No, they were holding some one back. As he watched, a figure tore itself free of the group and dashed across the boat-deck, thrusting forward an arm as it ran. There was a long spark of red, a little haze of smoke, a faint cracking like the distant spark of wireless, the minute splash of revolver bullets dropping into the sea as they fell short, like drops of rain. Schroeder swung about viciously, his jaw thrust forward, his blue eyes blazing. He looked toward the gun.

"Send that bridge to hell," he roared.

The knot of bluejackets about the nine-pounder sprang into action like mechanical toys. The gunnery lieutenant peered at the vessel through his binoculars.

" Three hundred and fifty yards," he jerked. "Angle of twelve."

The gunner braced himself to his lever. The group of bluejackets crouched as if about to run. A booming crash, like a single beat on a giant drum, rang out. A white fog of smoke floated along the submarine deck. Something red stabbed into the air for a moment. The bridge of the vessel exploded in a lick of yellow flame. Pieces of woodwork, bars of steel, dark masses like the bodies of men, flew into the air as though before a hurricane. A great silence seemed to come over the waters.

" Nine minutes gone," the commander muttered.

The first lieutenant made a megaphone of his hands.

" Nine minutes gone," he bellowed. His voice struck the air with a clang of brass.

Schroeder's face became like stone. The eyelids closed. His mouth tightened. He reached for the telephone at his feet. The air about the side of the liner became black with jumping bodies. The water alongside her was spotted with dark, bobbing spots.

" Just like rats," said the first lieutenant.

The commander raised the mouthpiece to his lips.

" Fire one and two," he commanded.

There was an ear-splitting scream from the compressed-air cylinders. The submarine jerked slightly twice, as though it had been struck violently. There was the hiss of escaping air. Schroeder bent forward and looked into the trough of the sea. Two indistinct lines of foam bubbles showed vaguely over the waves. The swimmers in the water frantically opened two lanes.

" Fire three and four." the commander ordered.

As he spoke a muffled crash rang out. A second came. Geysers of water jutted up at the bow and stern of the liner. They sprang into the air as though from a gigantic hose, and fell again in a hollow thud. The steamer keeled over suddenly, like a wounded man. It swung back sickeningly, listed and stayed there, its decks at an angle of forty. The swell of her lurch traveled across the

water like a tidal wave. The life-boat spun dangerously as it was lifted.

The air-cartridges screamed again, and again a pair of slender foam streaks cut across the waves.

"That'll finish her," said the chief officer.

Some one on board the liner screamed in terror. Other voices took it up. The sound clove through the air in a high, agonized crescendo. It suggested to Schroeder people tearing their lung apart.

"Just like pigs," said the first officer.

"Shut up," Schroeder growled. "There she goes."

The liner seemed to go up in the air in an immense pillar of white vapor and shattered wood. A crash like the discharge of heavy artillery vibrated across the water. She careened over, her stern high in the air, like a peak of rock sticking out of the waves. Metal, pieces of wood, water, stayed high for a moment and then began dropping.

"Got her in the boilers," the first lieutenant nodded.

The black stern of the steamer slipped into the waves as if some great hand had caught the vessel and was pulling her downward. The fan-like propeller showed for an instant like some grotesque sea-flower. It disappeared. There was a swirl of water, a patter of eddies and whirlpools, a seething of bubbles like soap-suds, a litter of wood chips, and then waves began forming again. Five hundred yards away from the submarine the first ship's boat pulled off, filled to the rowlocks with huddled, white-faced figures. In the distance another boat paddled with a scant three. Between them a life-raft hove and dropped on the waves, with a half-dozen drenched wretches clinging to her. Here and there a solitary head bobbed in the water.

The first lieutenant gazed soberly at the boats and the raft.

"Phew," he whistled, "not many left."

In the nearest boat a figure raised itself in the bow and shook clenched, impotent fists at the submarine. Schroeder looked at it a moment.

"Rifleman Wolff," he called.

The sharpshooter stood at attention.

"Get your piece and bring down that —— No. Don't mind."

He looked at it a moment longer.

"Bah! Shark food!" he muttered. He swung about.

"Stow the gun."

The nine-pounder disappeared into its pit. The shield closed to with a well-oiled click.

"Full speed ahead."

The cough of the gas-exhaust broke out. The deck vibrated. Foam curled at the bow.

"Nor'east by north," he ordered.

"Nor'east by north it is, sir," the quartermaster chimed.

The boats aft became pin-points of white, became blurs, vanished. The blue sea rolled, and the sun flashed down on it and turned the crests of the waves to beaten silver. A gull dipped and spiraled overhead, and a breeze rambled southward, salt, fragrant, with a hint of pine forest.

So for forty-eight hours they beat their way toward the eternal magnet of the North, their foamy wake lying long and straight behind like a plough-line, their periscopes standing tall and gallant like lances at a knight's knee. To starboard the green Norwegian coast lay in serrated ridges and in queer hidden bays and winding inlets. From the deck of the submarine, five miles away they could distinguish brown, slumbering villages and antique towns, and the delicate gray of corn ripening. Occasionally a coastwise vessel lumbered along, and when they saw one they dived discreetly. Here and there were the white patches of fishing-smacks. But no sign of the burly Russian vessels, nor of other contraband-carrying liners.

"We may raise something out of Narvik," Schroeder said. "We'll lie off the Lofodens and see."

As he paced the steel deck, a furrow came into the commander's face and the hint of a shadow into his eyes. He looked at the green coast-lines beneath focussed lids, as a man looks at an enemy intent on his next move. He was a little worried. The country oppressed him.

It gave him the impression of a distinct, more than human, entity, who knew what he had done to it, and was biding its time. He found himself visualizing it as an immense viking, armed, clad in shining greaves and cuirass, imperturbable, implacable, with all the cold, white fury of Northern men. He could imagine it flaying him—he shook himself with an uneasy laugh, but the feeling would not go.

As they drove onward, the sun went out of the sky, and clouds came up, black clouds, with the purple blackness of ink. A murky yellow spread over the water. A long, rising swell lifted in even rhythmical movements. From the distant shore the noise of surf reverberated like muffled drums. Four sea-gulls chased one another wearily landward. A northeaster came up and whipped spray from the tops of the waves like steam.

The first lieutenant turned to his chief with a grave face.

"Don't you think we'd better submerge, sir?" he suggested. "I don't like that nor'easter, and the tide's pulling like a rope. You know where we are."

"We're off the Lofoden Islands."

"Well, sir!"

"Well, what?"

"There's a pretty dangerous current running hereabout. The Maelstrom's five miles to leeward."

Schroeder laughed.

"The Maelstrom!" he chuckled. "For God's sake, have a bit of sense. Stop listening to fo'castle yarns. The Maelstrom! The Maelstrom!"

The first lieutenant looked him square in the face. There was something queer in his eyes.

"Look at the sea," he said. "Look at the wave-height. See how low it is. It ought to be thirty inches higher. Watch!"

He took a silver case from his pocket and threw a cigarette into the sea. It floated shoreward as if pulled by a string.

"Nine miles an hour," remarked the first officer laconically.

"We'd better head her out to sea," Schroeder nodded.

The coughing violence of the exhaust stopped for a moment, began spasmodically, and stopped again. An officer dashed up the manhole and sprang aft. He made his way through the swirl of water on the deck and peered over the stern. He straightened himself with a jerk.

"Stop the engines!" he shouted.

The signal flashed down to the operating-room in a jingle of bells. The submarine rocked to the swell like a cradle. The commander hurried aft.

"What's wrong?" he hailed.

"Propeller's foul," the officer at the stern snapped. "Bring the cage. Jump into a diving suit, some one."

A gang of bluejackets ran aft with a scaffolding of steel mesh. A sailor in the grotesque bulk of a diver's costume lumbered over the side and disappeared in an eddy of bubbles. The first lieutenant paced up and down the deck, his hands clinched until the knuckles showed white against the brown of the skin. He touched the commander on the arm.

"Better hurry," he advised. "Look!"

The waves had nearly died down. They showed only in faint, jagged ripples, like the patterns of snow on ploughed ground. The water seemed black and thick, like oil. A mile and a half away land bulked, like a shadow. There was the thunder of surf on rocks. Occasionally there was a booming report, like the firing of nine-pounders.

The diver rose out of the waves, a horrible dripping monster. They unscrewed his head-piece hastily.

"A big fisherman's net," he gasped, "around the propeller. All afoul."

Schroeder turned and shouted forward.

"Get a knife and hatchet," he ordered.

The diver looked at him with a white, scared face.

"I can't go down again," his voice became a hoarse whisper. "I can't do it. There's something pulling, sucking. . . ."

The commander looked at him with a cold, murderous eye.

"You'll go down again," he said calmly. He raised his voice. "Hurry up with those tools."

"I can't," the man whimpered. "Good God! I can't."

A white shroud of fog suddenly enveloped them. It converted them into towering, shadowy figures. The submarine spun suddenly in quarter its length, as if the helmsman had thrown over his wheel. They lurched about the deck for an instant. The thunder of the surf came nearer. The booming, artillery-like discharges crashed more distinctly. The first officer stamped his feet in impatience. He cracked his fingers. He whistled, as to a dog.

The fog cleared like a stage-curtain lifting. Ahead of them an expanse of black water spread like a village pond. To the right and to the left, a mile away and apart, islands reared like huge rocks. In front of them, across the expanse, a dim mirage of land showed. As they looked, the water broke into a pattern of eddies. Lines formed, as on the surface of a harbor in a catspaw of wind. A vast throaty gurgle shivered through the air. The bottom seemed to break in the water. It curled about in a small, in a large, in a gigantic, funnel. Something appeared on the edge of it, gray and brown. The submarine glided forward easily. The men on the deck had the impression of slipping along snow on skis. The gray-and-brown thing took form. They could see it was the battered hulk of a fishing-smack. It spun around in a flashing circle like a racing-car on a stadium track.

The first officer looked at it with a twitching face.

"All below," he shouted. His voice broke into a scream.

They plunged toward the manhole in a frantic rush. Schroeder's hands shook as he lowered himself. The manhole came to with a clang.

He picked his way toward the conning-tower with faltering feet. The alley tilted slightly under his feet. A feeling of dizziness was coming over him. He became suddenly cold and his heart seemed reluctant to

beat. He clambered into the control-chamber. The deck tilted. He held on to the stanchions for support. The engineer lieutenant clawed his way forward.

"Empty the air-tanks," Schroeder commanded. In the silence of the steel husk his voice sounded with horrible loudness. "We'll sink."

There was a violent jerk, as though an explosion had occurred against the hulk of the submarine. She turned about suddenly, like a wheel. Schroeder felt his head strike the iron of the wall. He slid to the floor in a crumpled heap.

"Open the other side, you fool," he shouted. Nobody answered.

The submarine spun about like a teetotum. Schroeder felt himself being thrown here and there, like a limp sack. There was the crash of things falling everywhere, the rattle of earthenware, the tinkle of steel, the resounding clang of brass. The odor of oil floated sickeningly around. There was the acrid tang of acid. He felt his head knock against the wall again. A feeling of nausea came over him.

He lay for a moment stunned, and, as he moved again, little visions, like queer, scrappy biograph pictures flashed in and out of his head. He saw the water about the *Olaf Horsa* black with bobbing heads. He saw the bridge of the steamer disappear in a yellow crash. He saw the man shaking clenched fists at him from the bow of the life-boat.

"War," he muttered to himself. "After all, it's war, isn't it? It's war."

Some one came hurtling down the alleyway, screaming as he ran. He tripped over Schroeder, picked himself up again, and lurched away. His voice broke out in horrible, tearing spasms. Schroeder remembered vaguely having heard that sound somewhere before. It was the death-cry on the Norwegian liner. The memory struck him with the force of a blow.

A little water trickled from somewhere and splashed on his face. It became a stream. It rippled metallically on the steel of the alley as though splashing into a zinc pail,

The thought that had been haunting him all day on his bridge flashed up in his mind with the blinding quality of a calcium light. Norway had him. Norway was taking its revenge. The mighty viking in flashing armor held him at its mercy. It was buffeting him, crushing him, throttling him with white, implacable fury.

He put his hands to his collar and tore it open savagely, and, throwing his head back, he began howling, suddenly, loudly, insanely, like a trapped wolf. . . .

*The Little Man in the Smoker

And the Story That He Told to Another Man

By James Francis Dwyer

"Yes, sir, they have been preparing for this war for more than forty years." You, too, fellow citizens, have listened to this statement. You have heard it often. On this particular occasion the words, uttered in a loud voice, roused me from a doze and I sat up and looked around me at the four occupants of the Pullman smoking-room.

I looked at the man who had made the remark which roused me. There was something in his voice that was not entirely pleasing. He had proclaimed the forty-year preparation in a voice that made me think he was a little wee bit proud of the Hun's foresight, a wee bit inclined to shout the news in the belief that it would act as a deterrent, as a courage cooler, to any one prepared to shoulder a rifle for civilization.

He was a hearty, round-faced person, wearing a big mustache that had a slight tilt at the ends. I had a vicious desire to question him about his nationality. Perhaps I was wrong, but —— He repeated the words as if for my benefit:

"That's right, gentlemen; they've been preparing for this war for over forty years!"

Again the undernote, the curious threatening subtone, the "mind-what-you're-doing" advice that was but dimly sensed and yet surely there.

There was a small, undersized man wedged into a corner of the leather seat.

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"And what have we been doing for forty years?" asked this little man.

"You mean the United States?" queried the fat person.

"I mean my country, the United States of America," answered the small person.

"Why you—that is, we've been doing nothing!" roared the big fellow. "Absolutely nothing! We've sat still and let the others prepare. We've believed foolishly in peace, and now when war has come we're a helpless nation that doesn't know which way to turn."

There was a silence for a few moments after the fat man made this assertion. Then the little fellow in the corner drew out a silver watch, studied it carefully and, still looking at the watch, made an observation.

"I've got twenty-five minutes before I reach my getting-off place," he said quietly. "And if no one has an objection to make I'd like to tell what my country, the United States, has done to prepare for war. That is, I'd like to tell of the things that have come under my own personal knowledge."

The man with the stiff mustaches smiled.

"Go ahead," he said in a manner that showed how utterly impossible he thought the task which the little fellow was attempting. "I'd like to hear what this country has done to keep a strong foe, a strong foe like the Germans, from jumping her."

The small man elbowed himself to the edge of the seat, glanced around him at his audience of four, and began speaking in a quiet voice that possessed a strange, soothing quality.

"I am a Swede," he said. "So is my wife. We came to New York in the year 1889.

"I couldn't speak English, neither could my wife. It was a drawback. I had no trade. I was just a plain laboring man from Upsala, and when I was offered a position as janitor in an apartment house on Washington Heights, I jumped at the offer. The wage was twenty-five dollars a month, with the use of three rooms in the basement.

"My oldest boy, Christian, was born in the basement

of that house on One Hundred and Thirty-seventh Street. So was my second boy, Sigurd, my youngest boy, Henrik, and my daughter, Hilda. All of them. One child a year was born to me during my first four years in the United States.

"When Christian was old enough to go to school, I took him round to Public School 186, on One Hundred and Forty-fifth Street. I saw the principal, a nice man. He took Christian and me into his office and he questioned me. I could not speak English very well, but it didn't matter. Not with him.

"'What do you do, Mr. Sigbold?' he asked.

"'I am a janitor,' I answered.

"'Well, Mr. Sigbold,' he said, 'we will do the best for little Christian, and when your other children are big enough to come to school, we will look after them too.'

"Gentlemen, that schoolmaster kept his word. My children were everything to me, and he had them in his keeping for nearly half of their waking time. That schoolmaster had them in his care all day, teaching them and molding their characters.

"I learned to speak correct English from my son, Christian. He taught my wife and me. I learned from him of George Washington, of Abraham Lincoln, of Nathan Hale, of Grant, of a thousand others. He got it at the school, got it from the principal who didn't care whether I was a janitor or a barrister, and whose only duty was to teach boys to be good citizens.

"They made my boy, Christian, flag bearer at the assembly exercises. Have any of you gentlemen witnessed those exercises? No? Well, the boy who is picked to carry the flag marches with it down the aisle, and the whole school stands and salutes it. And my boy, Christian, became flag bearer. I went over one morning and saw him, and I cried. Afterward I got into one great big row because a woman on the first floor reported that there was no steam heat.

"The landlord sent for me and asked me where I was and I told him.

"'My boy was made flag bearer at the school,' I said,

'and I went over to see him carry the Stars and Stripes at assembly. I got so hot and excited I forgot the steam heat.'

"'Well, don't forget again, Sigbold,' he said. 'The tenants haven't got the luck to have sons who are picked as flag bearers, and they are cold.'

"Christian graduated, gentlemen. He won a medal for history, my Christian, and I was there, there on the platform when it was presented to him. He brought it to me and his mother to look at, and the principal of that school saw us. He took me over and introduced me to a member of the Board of Education, me who was only a janitor and who had learned to speak proper English from my boy. Listen to me a little while and I will tell you what this country, this United States, has done to prepare for war!

"I cried that evening! Yes, sir, I'm not ashamed to acknowledge it: I cried! It was a gold medal presented by that commissioner that I had been introduced to, and my son had got it! My son, Christian! And I was a Swede, a laboring man from Upsala, who was working as a janitor!

"Wait! That commissioner wrote Christian to come and see him. Christian put on his best clothes and went down to his office in Cedar Street.

"'What would you like to be?' he asked Christian.

"'A lawyer,' answered Christian.

"'Very good,' said the commissioner. 'My brother will take you into his office. Take this note around to this address in Liberty Street and you can start right away.'

"My boy, Christian Sigbold, earned last year over thirteen thousand dollars. He is a junior partner of the firm that he went to work for as an office boy on that day."

The fat man with the big mustaches yawned and patted the stiff bristles with a huge, white palm. He seemed a little bored with the Swede's story; but the Swede, after another glance at his watch, continued:

"My second boy, Sigurd, also won a medal when he

graduated. He recited a poem—Paul Revere's Ride. It was wonderful to me. I did not know of Paul Revere till my boys told me about him. But, gentlemen, the night that Sigurd recited I sat there with little thrills racing up and down my spine. You see ——"

The fat man grew impatient and interrupted with a wave of his big hand. "But all this has nothing to do with what I said," he remarked irritably. "I stated that this country has made no preparations for war. She has sat quietly believing in the fool doctrine of peace, and now she is not equal to the task of protecting herself against a strong foe."

"Perhaps you think so because you like to think so!" snapped Sigbold. "Wait till I finish and I'll tell you what she has done! Wait."

The big fat man subsided. There was something strange about the fierceness of the little fellow. I doubt if the other two listeners had the slightest idea of the dramatic climax that he had ready for his narrative. I know that I had no thought of what it would be. I, like the big man, believed that he was an overproud parent who was ready to seize any opportunity to tell of the success achieved by his children.

"My boy, Sigurd, became a doctor, helped by that principal. He is a specialist. He is young, but he is well known. I am his father and perhaps it is wrong for me to boast, but I might be pardoned for telling you that a special train took him from New York to Chicago a few months ago so that he could perform an operation on a millionaire's baby who was dying from diphtheria.

"Henrik also became a flag bearer in that school. He loved it. Strong as a young bull he grew, and when he walked down the aisle carrying the silk flag you would think he was a young Crusader. He graduated and became an architect—Sigbold & Farrance is the firm, gentlemen. Mr. Farrance is my son-in-law; he married my daughter, Hilda. His father is from Christiania and he was educated at the same school as my sons."

The little man stopped, looked again at the silver watch, then got to his feet. The porter, armed with a whisk

broom, entered and, singling out the little man, led him to the door and started to brush him vigorously. I glanced at the other listeners and they, in turn, glanced at me. We were puzzled, the big fat man more than any of us. This amazement was so great that his lower jaw had dropped and a cavernous mouth showed beneath the Kaiser-like mustaches.

The train was slowing up and the fat man pulled himself together with an effort. "That's all very well," he cried; "you've fooled us into listening to a little history of your children. What's that got to do with preparing for war?"

"Do you know what place this is?" asked the little man quietly.

"No," answered the fat man.

"Well, it's the nearest station to one of Uncle Sam's biggest camps!" continued the little man quietly. "And I have three sons and a son-in-law in that camp, sir! I told you my boy Christian was earning thirteen thousand dollars a year? He's here as a private on thirty a month. Sigurd, who had a blank check given to him by the millionaire whose baby he saved, is here in the medical corps, and the firm of Sigbold & Farrance is out of existence. Both of them are here, designing trenches instead of Queen Anne villas!

"The old United States has not been asleep during the last forty years, gentlemen. She has been preparing, but preparing in a different way from the Huns. Instead of stripping her children of their self-respect, she has buckled on them an armor of pride like that which she buckled on my boys, and all hell can't lick 'em! Do you hear me, gentlemen? All hell can't lick 'em!"

. . . . . .

The porter brought the little chap's bag and he stepped into the passage with a farewell nod. The two other men and myself followed him to the car platform and watched him descend. Before he had climbed down the steps a husky quartet in khaki sprang at him, dragged him to the ground and carried him off bodily, howling and shrieking with delight as they tramped away.

"Gee," said one of the men standing at my elbow, "they're big soldiers! I suppose they're the little fellow's three sons and his son-in-law."

"I suppose so," I said. "If that fat man could see ——"

The man who had commented on the size of the soldiers gave my arm a warning touch and I stopped speaking. The mustached person, who in the beginning had loudly proclaimed the foresight of the Hun, was staring after the little fellow and his husky escorts with a look of puzzled wonder upon his face.

The train began to move, and the three of us stood there in the vestibule, noticing a number of stalwart figures in khaki as we slid past the platform.

"Well," I said—for the aggressiveness of the man had irritated me—"I guess there may be something in our friend's kind of preparedness, after all."

He grunted, and as the porter closed down the steps he turned away into the car. Then, in an abrupt, harsh way he wheeled round and spoke to the attendant.

"Is my bed made up?" he asked. "It is? Then I will go to bed at once. I feel very tired."

The man who had touched my sleeve turned and winked at me.

It was enough to make a Prussian feel tired!

*"Squads Right"

By Gilbert Emery

A United States Training Camp for Reserve Officers is an excellent place for psychological study of character, as I dare say the Officer Instructors find—that is, if their gifts happen to lie in that line. And if the aim of those organizations were other than strictly military, interesting and diverting data might be copiously obtained therefrom. There is a good bit of *war* rattling and clattering about their precincts, but there's not so much of *the war*. So something about them—I can't quite catch and label it—something about the men enlisted there, gives to the whole bellicose curriculum the quality of a game, a strenuous game, an amazing, wearisome, swashbuckling, roaring game, to be sure, but none the less a game. It's the absence of the enemy, no doubt, that so robs it of reality; that, and perhaps our national habit of making light of things generally. So the result is a loud, careless, fairly Rabelaisian cheerfulness, and a spirit of irresponsible youth that, on the face of it, thumbs its nose at the vast problems of the Allies, forgets to hate the Germans, and concentrates only on an egoistic conception, the which is, briefly, "What reward am I going to get out of all this back-and-leg-aching?"

Now this attitude to the sober-minded middle-thirty'd aspirant is very disconcerting, at the outset, to encounter. And it needs all the elasticity which his medium can command to adapt himself to the conditions. Not infrequently he comes a cropper, just because he fails to see that in the long run very likely this juvenile and what-

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the-hell-Bill nonchalance is by way of being a merciful interim given by the good Lord Himself; for the good Lord Himself knows it isn't going to last long, with them, "over there."

Mr. Henry Stringer Hopkins was thus disconcerted, when he had offered himself to his country and had, after due preliminaries, found himself in a cotton "issue" uniform, at once too tight and too loose, serving in the Second Camp as a candidate officer. And as his Maker had almost entirely—it would seem regrettably, omitted any form of elasticity in his make-up, Mr. Hopkins continued to be disconcerted, and worse, as time went on. And that is just what I am going to speak about.

I remember him very well, as he looked on the first day of the camp. We were hanging in a long line about the adjutant's office, all of us in a muddle of bravado, and bewilderment, and curiosity, and that Yankee carefulness of being sure no one was "putting something over" on us. He was very hot and very red and fattish and fussy (he'd lost something or other), and horribly serious. I put him down as four-and-forty; and it turned out he was two years older. Short, stocky, but softish in muscle; dressed with a dull, mussed propriety; earnest and plain; and peering out on the new world through those great horn spectacles which so attract the weak-eyed these days. We stood together momentarily.

"My name is Hopkins," he said, and gave me a most perspiring hand. "This is a pretty serious moment in a man's life, isn't it? An issue that involves life and death. A man should be proud to be able to be in it."

It startled me a little. I confess I was thinking just then of when we'd get the next meal and what it would be like and how my uniform would fit me. The man next us by the railing was saying—and remarkably spitting—"This's a hell of a place, ain't it? Why, when we was on the Border ——"

"Why, yes, I guess so," I stammered. "How do you think we'll like it here?"

"It doesn't matter at all how we like it," he responded solemnly. "I'm here to see this thing through to the

end. I want to fight for my country. Death itself I consider small, to keep the world safe for democracy."

Now, that is all very well to feel, and I make no doubt the bulk of us felt pretty much like Mr. Henry S. Hopkins, but put into words, right there—well, it seemed, so to say, indelicate; like talking of how you felt about God or the girl you love. I edged away embarrassedly.

Little by little things fell into shape in the camp. We were sorted out and classified; uniformed and armed; and screwed down tight into that military régime which is no respecter of persons or prejudices or predispositions. We learned to know our instructors and they learned to know us. We grew to recognize the bugle-calls and curse them all save "Come-and-get-it"—which means food. We got, each according to his lights, a point of view about the organization and aired it cockily. Intimacies sprang up among us; friendships; and dislikes, too. Squads were formed, and one was known, in general, by his squad number. In short, the system began to work. That anomalous bit of home, the only one a soldier in barracks knows, his cot-bed, acquired a personal and familiar quality; became a friendly habit for sleep or gossip or study. The popularity of a man's bunk offers a fairly good estimate of that man's popularity in the barracks—I mean during the few leisure moments the army concedes to its children.

No one frequented Mr. Hopkins' bunk—"Pappy's" bunk. For we got to the nickname stage of intercourse without wasting much time; and Hopkins was "Pappy" to the company. He didn't at all like to be called Pappy and he didn't like his comrades in arms "lolling," I believe that was the word he used, on his tidy bed. He wanted to be addressed as Mr. Hopkins. "I don't want to be too familiar with the rest of you, and I don't want you to be too familiar with me," he exploded to us one day irately.

"Oh, Pappy! O-o-oh, Pappy! Naughty—naughty!" was all he got, derisively.

"Why do they kid me like this?" he asked me, plaintively, one day as we lay flat on our bellies in a pestilent,

swampy spot, pretending to be an outpost, or something of the sort.

"Everybody kids everybody here," I replied evasively and a little crossly. The damp had got through my shirt.

"There are a lot of damn fools who kid," said Mr. Hopkins darkly, "and by kidding they stamp themselves as such. It is bad taste." He took off his hat and wiped his bald spot vindictively. "They may sing a different song when the commissions are given out."

I looked at him furtively in the raw light of early morning. I observed that he had lost much of his fleshy contour; his face was haggard, his eye harassed. He had the look of a man who was taking things terribly hard, both physically and mentally.

"A certain amount of kidding is good for a man," I hazarded.

"Not for me," said Mr. Hopkins grimly, and wriggled away into a wetter position.

The chief baiter of Pappy was a complacent young man named Frawley, of his squad. Frawley had had considerable training in military affairs before coming to the camp. As a matter of fact, he was very good at it, and if he hadn't been a spoiled brat with as little tact as any man was ever given to face life with, the company would have respected him. He belonged to that bullying class of human beings who give orders but who will not obey them. It was his custom during the infantry drill to heckle Mr. Hopkins in low, contemptuous tones. It was unfortunately true that Pappy with fatal consistency got everything wrong. Frawley rejoiced in this. Indeed, it seemed, as time went on, that Hopkins couldn't master the *métier*. It eluded and provoked and bewildered him. It pursued hotly; the sweat—Lord bless him, how the sweat gushed from him! His face got apoplectic. He made indomitable efforts—and went wrong.

There was the day, for instance, when he had charge of the company for a short period of try-out and ended by marching us hell-for-leather, double time, across the parade-ground into a ditch and against a five-foot stone

wall, bellowing at the top of his lungs, "Squads right! Squads right! For the third and last time I ask you to do squads right!"

Our captain, who was by no means a profane person, cursed as picturesquely and entertainingly as a good many years in various army posts and a sweet sense of the ridiculous had gifted him with. I'm not permitted to quote him here, but it was very funny. It ended with "God forgive you, Mr. Hopkins, *and come out of that!*"

Hopkins left us struggling at the *impasse* and saluted. "Sir," he cried passionately, "they refuse to obey me! They rebelled! I've given them 'Squads right' halfway across the drill ground. And they won't."

We saw the captain turn his back. He made as if to blow his nose; his shoulder heaved. When he faced about he was very bland; there was a twinkle in his eye.

"You omitted the command of execution, Mr. Hopkins. There was no rebellion. Mr. Frawley, take charge of the company and remove it to a more edifying spot."

Poor old Pappy shouldered his gun and trudged along bitterly in the ranks. We kidded him, I'm afraid, heartlessly, because such an organization as ours is heartless—light-heartless, you might say. Heartless, but good-natured. No one, I think, put anything into it except fun, no one but a great raw cub named Witherspoon with a bulging forehead, fish eyes, and a pasty face. He snickered with the futile malice of a child, loud enough for Hopkins to hear: "Damned old man! Why do they have old men here like that? He's too old to learn anything." And some one prodded the speaker with a bayonet.

It's hardly necessary to say, is it? that Mr. Hopkins from that hour till the day we saw him last was known as "Squads Right." He'd had an indescribable way of shouting these words, with an amazing and terrifying movement of the mouth. I can give no notion of the sound save to suggest that it rather resembled the noise inadvertently emitted by a person hit unexpectedly in the pit of the stomach.

The system screwed tighter and tighter as the weeks

wore on. The physical strain was pretty hard for us all; and mental worry had a fair part, too, in it all. No one thought very much or cared very much what was going to happen to his neighbor. His mind was desperately on his own case, and devil take the hindermost. It needed all the gaiety and good humor a man and his friends could muster to keep a decently serene front. Just so, no one gave a second thought to old "Squads Right," to a little wonder whether he was "all in" or lonely and low in his soul. He went to and fro about his business, his clothes put on all askew, his mouth grim and his eye distraught—doing it all just the way it shouldn't be done. And we watched him and laughed. We'd grown so used to his nightly remarks in the squad room after taps that we had ceased to jeer—all of us except Frawley. "If you fellows were officers and gentlemen, you'd stop talking and let a fellow sleep."

It is astonishing how horribly alone a man can live in a crowd.

If any one spoke of Hopkins at all, it was with a careless—"Oh, he won't last long, poor old nut." And it began to look that way. He was at the tail of every hike, puffing and straining fearsomely. He drew his maps in startling but untrustworthy designs. He muddled the commands. He fell over the hurdles on the bayonet run and nearly stabbed himself and his neighbors. He got lumbago digging trenches. And he had a score of forty out of a possible two hundred and fifty on the rifle-range. No, it was evident old Squads Right wouldn't do. And nobody cared—not a soul in the camp.

One afternoon it all ended. We were cleaning up for retreat—faces and boots and guns. The top-sergeant bawled through the room: "Mr. Hopkins to report to the captain at once."

Squads Right clumped out grimly.

"He's got his," giggled the Witherspoon boy, repulsively. "I heard 'em talkin' last night in the officers' room."

Later, in the street, as the company stood at rest waiting for the colors to come up, a donkey trotted by.

Frawley said stupidly: "There goes Squads Right." It was so stupid that only one or two of the weakest-minded laughed. Hopkins looked steadily ahead. We came to attention the next moment and marched off.

When we were back again in the barracks an hour later I saw Squads Right come up to Frawley, as he stood by his bunk, say a word or two tensely and then without any more parley strike him calmly and majestically straight on the nose. Frawley went down with a thud between the bunks, got up and thrust out blindly and bloodily with a good deal of "let-me-at-'im." We gathered around and separated the combatants. That sort of thing couldn't be allowed in barracks between candidate officers. Little Fitch confided afterward to me—"Fraw didn't struggle half so hard to get at him as he could have. I held him."

Sellers cocked his head and remarked in his whimsical fashion—"Perfect—quite perfect, by Jove!"

And just because a crowd is always a crowd and can be banked on for any extraordinary weathercock turning at the most unexpected moments, old Squads Right had us with him almost to a man—the whole company. It seemed high justice from heaven meted out to Frawley. We had all suffered at his hands and we all felt a profound satisfaction to see the job done. Squads was a hero. We patted him on the back while Frawley was out mopping off his nose.

"Good boy!"

"Anything you want in the company is yours."

"Hurray for old Squads!" etc., *ad lib.*

But that by no means is the point of this account: how Squads thus easily became our hero. Something happened then which lifted him out of the prize-ring and put him into another class, one nobler and finer, it seems to me, than we ourselves, the rest of us, may ever get into.

Mr. Hopkins stood impressively by the scene of combat. He was very self-possessed. His eyes wandered wearily over our faces and on beyond to the rows and rows of bunks and their festoons of equipment. Little by little our laughter and joking faded out. We eyed

Squads questioningly, as if he were about to speak to us—say something unusual. He did.

"Mr. Frawley got what he deserved," he said, by way of casual explanation. "He is a very rude young man. That is of no consequence." He paused a moment and his eyes mellowed pathetically. "I wish I had not hit him," he went on laboriously. "Not because I regret the blow, but—well—well—because for the first time since I've been in this camp, you fellows have—patted me on the back. I'm a cross-grained old chap. It's my fault. I don't blame any one but myself. Only you see—they've canned me. To-day. And just your saying 'Good for you——'" I think he tried to say "Squads Right," but couldn't wrench it out—"er—'Hopkins,' makes it harder to go."

We were all very silent—shamefaced—and uneasy.

"I ought to go. I'm no good. I don't kick. But, men, I hate to go. You don't know what it means to me, this. I want to tell you. Just to make it a little clearer." He became, somehow, just then, the leader of the lot. I can't quite say why. Something in his face, his voice.

"I've got two boys—just under the draft age. I've sacrificed a good deal for them—for education and all that. And when this thing came—this war—they've got Revolutionary blood in them, too—I waited for them to come up and say, 'Father, we're going!' And I waited—and waited. They didn't speak. I tell you I'll never have to bear a thing so hard again. And then I spoke. I asked them: 'What are you going to do?' And they couldn't answer. My boys! My own boys! And they took refuge with their mother—think of it! She protected them. Told them they needn't go. That it would break her heart. And—and—they let her persuade them. *My* boys! 'Well,' I said, 'if you won't fight, you'll work, damn you!' And I've ceased to do a thing more for them. This war—why, it means everything to me. I'd give—" his voice broke painfully. I detected tears in the eyes of little Fitch—"I'd give anything to—I said, 'By God, then I'll go!' I left my business—a good one—and came down here to learn how to fight. It

seemed to me I *had* to. And—well, you've seen me. I'm too old. Too clumsy. Too thick-headed. And yet, I've got a fighting heart that will lick the lot of you. Now I'm canned—I've told this—I wanted you to know that—inside I'm not so rotten as I seem outside—gentlemen. Fight! For God's sake, *fight!* And fight for me, too!"

Mr. Hopkins ceased and with a gasp recalled himself to the situation. I think he was dreadfully dismayed over what he had done. At any rate, he pulled himself together with a great effort and said primly: "Gentlemen, I'm glad to have made your acquaintance. I wish you all good-bye. I'm going to try to get a job driving an ambulance over there. Good-evening."

Harkson, who has the biggest heart in the world, got his hand first. And then every man of us filed by and gave him a grip that had in it a little of what our hearts were full of. The last of us was Frawley—with a swelled nose and bruised lip.

"God bless you, Mr. Hopkins! Some of us may meet you over there—in your ambulance. Shall you mind if we call you Squads Right, then, when you shove us in?"

*One Hundred Per Cent

By Edna Ferber

They had always had two morning papers—he his, she hers. The *Times*. Both. Nothing could illustrate more clearly the plan on which Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Buck conducted their married life. Theirs was the morning calm and harmony which comes to two people who are free to digest breakfast and the First Page simultaneously with no—"Just let me see the inside sheet, will you, dear?" to mar the day's beginning.

In the days when she had been Mrs. Emma McChesney, traveling saleswoman for the T. A. Buck Featherloom Petticoat Company, New York, her perusal of the morning's news had been, perforce, a hasty process, accomplished between trains, or in a small-town hotel 'bus, jolting its way to the depot for the 7:52; or over an American plan breakfast throughout which seven-eighths of her mind was intent on the purchasing possibilities of a prospective nine o'clock skirt buyer. There was no need now of haste, but the habit of years still clung. From eight-thirty to eight thirty-five A. M. Emma McChesney Buck was always in partial eclipse behind the billowing pages of her newspaper. Only the tip of her topmost coil of bright hair was visible. She read swiftly, darting from war news to health hints, from stock market to sport page, and finding something of interest in each. For her there was nothing cryptic in a head-line such as "Rudie Slams One Home"; and Do pfd followed by dotted lines and vulgar fractions were to her as easily translated as the Daily Hint From Paris. Hers was the

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photographic eye and the alert brain that can film a column or a page at a glance.

Across the table her husband sat turned slightly sidewise in his chair, his paper folded in a tidy oblong. He read down one column, top of the next and down that, seriously and methodically; giving to toast or coffee-cup the single-handed and groping attention of one whose interest is elsewhere. The light from the big bay window fell on the printed page and cameoed his profile. After three years of daily contact with it, Emma still caught herself occasionally gazing with appreciation at that clear-cut profile and the clean, shining line of his hair as it grew away from the temple.

"T. A.," she had announced one morning, to his mystification, "you're the Francis X. Bushman of the breakfast table. I believe you sit that way purposely."

"Francis X——?" He was not a follower of the films.

Emma elucidated. "Discoverer and world's champion exponent of the side face."

"I might punish you, Emma, by making a pun about its all being Greek to me, but I shan't." He returned to Page Two, Column Four.

Usually their conversation was comfortably monosyllabic and disjointed, as is the breakfast talk of two people who understand each other. Amicable silence was the rule, broken only by the rustle of paper, the clink of china, an occasional, "Toast, dear?" And when Buck, in a low, vibrating tone (slightly muffled by buttered corn muffin) said, "Dogs!" Emma knew he was perusing the daily *schrecklichkeit.*

Upon this cozy scene Conservation cast his gaunt shadow. It was in June, the year of America's Great Step, that Emma, examining her household, pronounced it fattily degenerate, with complications, and performed upon it a severe and skilful surgical operation. Among the rest:

"One morning paper ought to be enough for any husband and wife who aren't living on a Boffin basis. There'll be one copy of the *Times* delivered at this house

in the future, Mr. Buck. We might match pennies for it, mornings."

It lay there on the hall table that first morning, an innocent oblong, its head-lines staring up at them with inky eyes.

"Paper, T. A.," she said, and handed it to him.

"You take it, dear."

"Oh, no! No."

She poured the coffee, trying to keep her gaze away from the tantalizing tail-end of the head-line at whose first half she could only guess.

"By Jove, Emma! Listen to this! Pershing says that if we have one m——"

"Stop right there! We've become pretty well acquainted in the last three years, T. A. But if you haven't learned that if there's one thing I can't endure, it's being fed across the table with scraps of the day's news, I shall have to consider our marriage a failure."

"Oh, very well. I merely thought you'd be——"

"I am. But there's something about having it read to you——"

On the second morning Emma, hurriedly fastening the middle button of her blouse on her way down-stairs, collided with her husband, who was shrugging himself into his coat. They continued their way down-stairs with considerable dignity and pronounced leisure. The paper lay on the hall table. They reached for it. There was a moment—just the fraction of a minute—when each clutched a corner of it, eyeing the other grimly. Then both let go suddenly, as though the paper had burned their fingers. They stared at each other, surprise and horror in their gaze. The paper fell to the floor with a little slap. Both stooped for it, apologetically. Their heads bumped. They staggered back, semi-stunned.

Emma found herself laughing, rather wildly. Buck joined in after a moment—a rueful laugh. She was the first to recover.

"That settles it. I'm willing to eat trick bread and whale meat and drink sugarless coffee, but I draw the line at hating my husband for the price of a newspaper sub-

scription. White paper may be scarce, but so are husbands. It's cheaper to get two newspapers than to set up two establishments."

They were only two among many millions who, at that time, were playing an amusing and fashionable game called Win the War. They did not realize that the game was to develop into a grim and magnificently functioning business to whose demands they would cheerfully sacrifice all that they most treasured.

Of late, Emma had spent less and less time in the offices of the Featherloom Company. For over ten years that flourishing business, and the career of her son, Jock McChesney, had been the twin orbits about which her existence had revolved. But Jock McChesney was a man of family now, with a wife, two babies, and an uncanny advertising sense that threatened to put his name on the letter-head of the Raynor Advertising Company of Chicago. As for the Featherloom factory—it seemed to go of its own momentum. After her marriage to the firm's head, Emma's interest in the business was unflagging.

"Now look here, Emma," Buck would say. "You've given enough to this firm. Play a while. Cut up. Forget you're the 'And Company' in T. A. Buck & Co."

"But I'm so used to it. I'd miss it so. You know what happened that first year of our marriage when I tried to do the duchess. I don't know how to loll. If you take Featherlooms away from me, I'll degenerate into a Madam Chairman. You'll see."

She might have, too, if the War had not come along and saved her. Still, she had consented not to go down to the office at 9:30 every morning with her husband. She spent only two or three hours daily in the offices and the big, bright showrooms and workrooms. And if you happened into the old brownstone house on East Sixty-third at five o'clock or thereabouts, you were very likely to hear the tinkle of teacups.

By midsummer the workrooms were turning out not only the accustomed grist of petticoats, but strange garments, such as gray and khaki flannel shirts, flannelette

one-piece pajamas, and woolen bloomers, all intended for the needs of women war workers going abroad. Emma had been responsible for the success of two of these Featherloom products. The one-piece pajama was a God-send to the women overseas working in the mist-haunted, damp-laden, heatless villages of France and Flanders. And a seemingly trivial item—the tailored, neck-fitting collar—made the Featherloom service shirt for women the standard for war workers.

Emma had dropped into the workroom one day and had picked up a half-finished gray flannel garment. She eyed it critically, her deft fingers manipulating the neck-band. A little frown gathered between her eyes.

"Somehow a woman in a flannel shirt always looks as if she had quinsy. It's the collar. They cut them like a man's small-size. But a woman's neck is as different from a man's as her collar-bone is."

She picked up a piece of flannel and smoothed it on the cutting-table. The head designer had looked on in disapproval while her employer's wife had experimented with scraps of cloth, and pins, and chalk and scissors. She had her opinion of meddlesome matrons in Fifth Avenue hats and suits who upset the shop and tried to teach an experienced designer her business. But Emma had gone on serenely cutting and snipping and pinning. They made up samples of service shirts with the new neck-hugging collar and submitted them to Miss Nevins, the head of the woman's uniform department at Fyfe & Gordon's. That astute lady had been obliged to listen to scores of canteeners, nurses, secretaries and motor leaguers who, standing before a long mirror in one of the many fitting-rooms, had gazed, frowned, fumbled at collar and topmost button, and said, "But it looks so—so lumpy around the neck."

Miss Kate Nevins, diplomat and department head (the terms are dependent one on the other), always came in for a final fitting. Her reply to this plaint was: "Oh, when you get your tie on ——"

But the overseas worker, gloomily regarding the image

in the mirror, felt her patriotism oozing. Then brightly: "Perhaps they'll let me wear a turn-down collar."

Miss Nevins would shake her head. "Absolutely against regulations. The rules strictly forbid anything but the high, close-fitting collar."

The fair war worker would sigh, mutter something about supposing they'd shoot you at sunrise for wearing a becoming shirt, and order six, grumbling. Fyfe & Gordon's had the official sanction of the government. They were the court of last resort. If you couldn't get it at the great outfitting establishment on Madison Avenue, New York could not produce it.

Kate Nevins had known Mrs. T. A. Buck in that lady's Emma McChesney days. At the end of the first day's trial of the new Featherloom shirt she had telephoned the Featherloom factory and had asked for Emma McChesney. People who had known her by that name never seemed able to get the trick of calling her by any other.

With every fitting-room in the Fyfe & Gordon establishment demanding her attention, Miss Nevins' conversation was necessarily brief.

"Emma McChesney? . . . Kate Nevins. . . . Who's responsible for the collar on those Featherloom shirts? . . . I was sure of it. . . . No regular designer could cut a collar like that. Takes a genius. . . . H'm? . . . Well, I mean it. I'm going to write to Washington and have 'em vote you a distinguished service medal. This is the first day since last I-don't-know-when that hasn't found me in the last stages of nervous exhaustion at six o'clock. . . . All these women warriors are willing to bleed and die for their country, but they want to do it in a collar that fits, and I don't blame 'em. After I saw the pictures of that Russian Battalion of Death, I understood why. . . . Yes, I know I oughtn't to say that, but . . ."

By autumn Emma was wearing one of those Featherloom service shirts herself. It was inevitable that a woman of her executive ability, initiative and detail sense should be pressed into active service. November saw

Fifth Avenue a-glitter with uniforms, and one-third of them seemed to be petticoated. The Featherloom factory saw little of Emma now. She bore the title of Commandant, with feminine captains, lieutenants and girl workers under her; and her blue uniform, as she herself put it, was so a-jingle with straps, buckles, belts, bars and bolts that when she first put it on she felt dressed up like a jail.

She left the house at eight in the morning now. Dinner time rarely found her back in Sixty-third Street. Buck was devoting four evenings a week to the draft board. At the time of the second Liberty Loan drive in the autumn he had deserted Featherlooms for bonds. His success was due to the commodity he had for sale, the type of person to whom he sold it, and his own selling methods and personality. There was something about this slim, leisurely man, with the handsome eyes and the quiet voice, that convinced and impressed you.

"It's your complete lack of eagerness in the transaction, too," Emma remarked after watching him land a twenty-five-thousand-dollar bond pledge, the buyer a business rival of the Featherloom Petticoat Company. "You make it seem a privilege, not a favor. A man with your method could sell sand-bags in the Sahara."

Sometimes the two dined down-town together. Sometimes they scarcely saw each other for days on end. One afternoon at 5:30, Emma, on duty bound, espied him walking home up Fifth Avenue, on the opposite side of the street. She felt a little pang as she watched the easy, graceful figure swinging its way up the brilliant, flag-decked street. She had given him so little time and thought; she had bestowed upon the house such scant attention in the last few weeks. She turned abruptly and crossed the street, dodging the late afternoon traffic with a sort of expert recklessness. She almost ran after the tall figure that was now a block ahead of her, and walking fast. She caught up with him, matched his stride, and touched his arm lightly.

"I beg your pardon, but aren't you Mr. T. A. Buck?"

His eyes danced, but he bowed gravely. "Yes."

She extended her hand. "How do you do! I'm Mrs. Buck."

Then they had giggled together deliciously, and he had put a firm hand on the smartly tailored blue serge sleeve.

"I thought so. That being the case, you're coming home along o' me, young 'ooman."

"Can't do it. I'm on my way to the Ritz to meet a dashing delegation from Serbia. You never saw such gorgeous creatures. All gold and green and red, with swords, and snake-work and glittering boots. They'd make a musical-comedy soldier look like an undertaker."

There came a queer little look into his eyes. "But this isn't a musical comedy, dear. These men are —— Look here, Emma. I want to talk to you. Let's walk home together and have dinner decently in our own dining-room. There are things at the office ——"

"S'impossible, Mr. Buck. I'm late now. And you know perfectly well there are two vice-commandants ready to snatch my shoulder-straps."

"Emma! Emma!"

At his tone the smiling animation of her face was dimmed. "What's gone wrong?"

"Nothing. Everything. At least, nothing that I can discuss with you at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Forty-fifth Street. When does this Serbian thing end? I'll call for you."

"There's no telling. Anyway, the Fannings will drive me home, thanks, dear."

He looked down at her. She was unbelievably girlish and distingué in the blue uniform; a straight, slim figure, topped by an impudent cocked hat. The flannel shirt of workaday service was replaced to-day by a severely smart affair of white silk; high-collared, stitched, expensively simple. And yet he frowned as he looked.

"Fisk got his exemption papers to-day." With apparent irrelevance.

"Yes?" She was glancing sharply up and down the thronged street. "Better call me a cab, dear. I'm awfully late. Oh, well, with his wife practically an invalid, and all the expense of the baby's illness, and the

funeral —— The Ritz, dear. And tell him to hurry." She stepped into the cab, a little nervous frown between her eyes.

But Buck, standing at the curb, seemed bent on delaying her. "Fisk told me the doctor said all she needs is a couple of months at a sanitarium, where she can be bathed and massaged and fed with milk. And if Fisk could go to a camp now he'd have a commission in no time. He's had training, you know. He spent his vacation last summer at Plattsburg."

"But he's due on his advance spring trip in two or three weeks, isn't he? . . . I really must hurry, T. A."

"Ritz," said Buck, shortly, to the chauffeur. "And hurry." He turned away abruptly, without a backward glance. Emma's head jerked over her shoulder in surprise. But he did not turn. The tall figure disappeared. Emma's taxi crept into the stream. But uppermost in her mind was not the thought of Serbians, uniforms, Fisk, or Ritz, but of her husband's right hand, which, as he turned away from the cab, had been folded tight into a fist.

She meant to ask an explanation of the clenched fingers; but the Serbians, despite their four tragic years, turned out to be as sprightly as their uniforms, and it was past midnight when the Fannings dropped her at her door. Her husband was rather ostentatiously asleep. As she doffed her warlike garments, her feminine canniness warned her that this was no time for explanations. To-morrow morning would be better.

But next morning's breakfast turned out to be all Jock.

A letter from Grace, his wife. Grace McChesney had been Grace Galt, one of the youngest and cleverest women advertising writers in the profession. When Jock was a cub in the Raynor office she had been turning out compelling copy. They had been married four years. Now Jock ruled a mahogany domain of his own in the Raynor suite overlooking the lake, in the great Michigan Avenue building. And Grace was saying, "Eat the crust,

girlie. It's the crust that makes your hair grow curly."

Emma, uniformed for work, read hasty extracts from Grace's letter. Buck listened in silence.

"You wouldn't know Jock. He's restless, irritable, moody. And the queer part of it is he doesn't know it. He tries to be cheerful, and I could weep to see him. He has tried to cover it up with every kind of war work from Red Crossing to Liberty Loaning, and from writing free full-page national advertising copy to giving up his tobacco money to the smoke fund. And he's miserable. He wants to get into it. And he ought. But you know I haven't been really husky since Buddy came. Not ill, but the doctor says it will be another six months before I'm myself, really. If I had only myself to think of—how simple! But two kiddies need such a lot of things. I could get a job at Raynor's. They need writers. Jock says, bitterly, that all the worth-while men have left. Don't think I'm complaining. I'm just trying to see my way clear, and talking to some one who understands often clears the way."

"Well!" said Emma.

And, "Well?" said T. A.

She sat fingering the letter, her breakfast cooling before her. "Of course, Jock wants to get into it. I wish he could. I'd be so proud of him. He'd be beautiful in khaki. But there's work to do right here. And he ought to be willing to wait six months."

"They can't wait six months over there, Emma. They need him now."

"Oh, come, T. A.! One man ——"

"Multiplied by a million. Look at Fisk. Just such another case. Look at ——"

The shrill summons of the telephone cut him short. Emma's head came up alertly. She glanced at her wrist-watch and gave a little exclamation of horror.

"That's for me! I'm half an hour late! The first time, too." She was at the telephone a second later, explanatory, apologetic. Then back in the dining-room doorway, her cheeks flushed, tugging at her gloves, poised

for flight. "Sorry, dear. But this morning was so important, and that letter about Jock upset me. I'm afraid I'm a rotten soldier."

"I'm afraid you are, Emma."

She stared at that. "Why——! Oh, you're still angry at something. Listen, dear—I'll call for you at the office to-night at five, and we'll walk home together. Wait for me. I may be a few minutes late——"

She was off. The front door slammed sharply. Buck sat very still for a long minute, staring down at the coffee-cup, whose contents he did not mean to drink. The light from the window cameoed his fine profile. And you saw that his jaw was set. His mind was a thousand miles away, in Chicago, Illinois, with the boy who wanted to fight and couldn't.

Emma, flashing down Fifth Avenue as fast as wheels and traffic rules would permit, saw nothing of the splendid street. Her mind was a thousand miles away, in Chicago, Illinois.

And a thousand miles away, in Chicago, Illinois, Jock McChesney, three hours later, was slamming down the two big windows of his office. From up the street came the sound of a bugle and of a band playing a brisk march. And his office windows looked out upon Michigan Avenue. If you know Chicago, you know the building that housed the Raynor offices—a great gray shaft, towering even above its giant neighbors, its head in the clouds, its face set toward the blue beauty of Lake Michigan. Until very recently those windows of his office had been a source of joy and inspiration to Jock McChesney. The green of Grant Park just below. The tangle of I. C. tracks beyond that, and the great, gracious lake beyond that, as far as the eye could see. He had seen the changes the year had brought. The lake dotted with sinister gray craft. Dog tents in Grant Park, sprung up over-night like brown mushrooms. Men—mere boys, most of them—awkward in their workaday clothes of office and shop, drilling, wheeling, marching at the noon hour. And parades, and parades, and parades. At first Jock, and, in fact, the entire office staff—heads of departments,

writers, secretaries, stenographers, office boys—would suspend business and crowd to the windows to see the pageant pass in the street below. Stirring music, khaki columns, flags, pennants, horses, bugles. And always the Jackie band from the Great Lakes Station, its white leggings twinkling down the street in the lead of its six-foot-six contortionistic drum-major.

By October the window-gazers, watching the parades from the Raynor windows, were mostly petticoated and exclamatory. Jock stayed away from the window now. It seemed to his tortured mind that there was a fresh parade hourly, and that bugles and bands sounded a taunting note.

"Where are *you!* (sounded the bugle)?
Where are *you?*
Where are YOU? ! ! !
Where
are
you,
Where—are—you-u-u-u ——"

He slammed down the windows, summoned a stenographer, and gave out dictation in a loud, rasping voice.

"Yours of the tenth at hand, and contents noted. In reply I wish to say ——"

(Boom! Boom! And a boom-boom-boom!)

"—— all copy for the Sans Scent Soap is now ready for your approval and will be mailed to you to-day under separate cover. We in the office think that this copy marks a new record in soap advertising ——"

(Over there! Over there! Send the word, send the word over there!)

"Just read that last line, will you, Miss Dugan?"

"Over th—I mean, 'We in the office think that this copy marks a new record in soap advertising ——'"

"H'm. Yes." A moment's pause. A dreamy look on the face of the girl stenographer. Jock interpreted it. He knew that the stenographer was in the chair at the side of his desk, taking his dictation accurately and

swiftly, while the spirit of the girl herself was far and away at Camp Grant at Rockford, Illinois, with an olive drab unit in an olive drab world.

"—— and, in fact, in advertising copy of any description that has been sent out from the Raynor offices."

The girl's pencil flew over the pad. But when Jock paused for thought or breath she lifted her head and her eyes grew soft and bright, and her foot, in its absurd high-heeled gray boot, beat a smart left! Left! Left-right-left!

Something of this picture T. A. Buck saw in his untasted coffee-cup. Much of it Emma visualized in her speeding motor car. All of it Grace knew by heart as she moved about the new, shining house in the Chicago suburb, thinking, planning; feeling his agony, and trying not to admit the transparency of the look about her hands and her temples. So much for Chicago.

At five o'clock Emma left the war to its own devices and dropped in at the loft building in which Featherlooms were born and grown up. Mike, the elevator man, twisted his gray head about at an unbelievable length to gaze appreciatively at the trim, uniformed figure.

"Haven't seen you around fur many the day, Mis' Buck."

"Been too busy, Mike."

Mike turned back to face the door. "Well, 'tis a great responsibility, runnin' this war, an' all." He stopped at the Featherloom floor and opened the door with his grandest flourish. Emma glanced at him quickly. His face was impassive. She passed into the reception room with a little jingling of buckles and strap hooks.

The work day was almost ended. The display room was empty of buyers. She could see the back of her husband's head in his office. He was busy at his desk. A stock girl was clearing away the piles of garments that littered tables and chairs. At the window near the door Fisk, the Western territory man, stood talking with O'Brien, city salesman. The two looked around at her approach. O'Brien's face lighted up with admiration. Into Fisk's face there flashed a look so nearly resembling

resentment that Emma, curious to know its origin, stopped to chat a moment with the two.

Said O'Brien, the gallant Irishman, "I'm more resigned to war this minute, Mrs. Buck, than I've been since it began."

Emma dimpled, turned to Fisk, stood at attention. Fisk said nothing. His face was unsmiling. "Like my uniform?" Emma asked; and wished, somehow, that she hadn't.

Fisk stared. His eyes had none of the softness of admiration. They were hard, resentful. Suddenly, "Like it! God! I wish I could wear one!" He turned away abruptly. O'Brien threw him a sharp look. Then he cleared his throat, apologetically.

Emma glanced down at her own trim self—at her stitched seams, her tailored lengths, her shining belt and buckles, her gloved hands—and suddenly and unaccountably her pride in them vanished. Something—something——

She wheeled and made for Buck's office, her color high. He looked up, rose, offered her a chair. She felt strangely ill at ease there in the office to which she had given years of service. The bookkeeper in the glass-enclosed cubby-hole across the little hall smiled and nodded and called through the open door, "My, you're a stranger, Mrs. Buck."

"Be with you in a minute, Emma," said T. A. And turned to his desk again. She rose and strolled toward the door, restlessly. "Don't hurry." Out in the showroom again she saw Fisk standing before a long table. He was ticketing and folding samples of petticoats, pajamas, blouses and nightgowns. His cigar was gripped savagely between his teeth and his eyes squinted half-closed through the smoke.

She strolled over to him and fingered the cotton flannel of a garment that lay under her hand. "Spring samples?"

"Yes."

"It ought to be a good trip. They say the West is dripping money, war or no war."

"'S right."

"How's Gertie?"

"Don't get me started, Mrs. Buck. That girl!—say, I knew what she was when I married her, and so did you. She was head stenographer here long enough. But I never really knew that kid until now, and we've been married two years. You know what the last year has been for her; the baby and all. And then losing him. And do you know what she says! That if there was somebody who knew the Western territory and could cover it, she'd get a job and send me to war. Yessir! That's Gert. We've been married two years, and she says herself it's the first really happy time she's ever known. You know what she had at home. Why, even when I was away on my long spring trip she used to say it wasn't so bad being alone, because there was always my home-coming to count on. How's that for a wife!"

"Gertie's splendid," agreed Emma. And wondered why it sounded so lame.

"You don't know her. Why, when it comes to patriotism, she makes T. R. look like a pacifist. She says if she could sell my line on the road, she'd make you give her the job so she could send her man to war. Gert says a traveling man's wife ought to make an ideal soldier's wife, anyway; and that if I went it would only be like my long Western trip, multiplied by about ten, maybe. That's Gertie."

Emma was fingering the cotton-flannel garment on the table.

Buck crossed the room and stood beside her. "Sorry I kept you waiting. Three of the boys were called to-day. It crippled us pretty badly in the shipping-room. Ready?"

"Yes. Good-night, Charley. Give my love to Gertie."

"Thanks, Mrs. Buck." He picked up his cigar, took an apprehensive puff, and went on ticketing and folding. There was a grin behind the cigar now.

Into the late afternoon glitter of Fifth Avenue. Five o'clock Fifth Avenue. Flags of every nation, save one. Uniforms of every blue from French to navy; of almost any shade save field green. Pongee-colored Englishmen,

seeming seven feet high, to a man; aviators slim and elegant, with walking-sticks made of the propeller of their shattered planes, with a notch for every Hun plane bagged. Slim girls, exotic as the orchids they wore, gazing limpid-eyed at these warrior *élégants*. Women uniformed to the last degree of tailored exquisiteness. Girls, war accoutered, who brought arms up in sharp salute as they passed Emma. Buck eyed them gravely, hat and arm describing parabolas with increasing frequency as they approached Fiftieth Street, slackening as the colorful pageant grew less brilliant, thinned, and faded into the park mists.

Emma's cheeks were a glorious rose-pink. Head high, shoulders back, she matched her husband's long stride every step of the way. Her eyes were bright and very blue.

"There's a beautiful one, T. A.! The Canadian officer with the limp. They've all been gassed, and shot five times in the thigh and seven in the shoulder, and yet look at 'em! What do you suppose they were when they were new if they can look like that, damaged!"

Buck cut a vicious little semicircle in the air with his walking-stick.

"I know now how the father of the Gracchi felt, and why you never hear him mentioned."

"Nonsense, T. A. You're doing a lot." She did not intend her tone to be smug; but if she had glanced sidewise at her husband, she might have seen the pained red mount from chin to brow. She did not seem to sense his hurt. They went on, past the plaza now. Only a few blocks lay between them and their home; the old brownstone house that had been New York's definition of architectural elegance in the time of T. A. Buck, Sr.

"Tell me, Emma. Does this satisfy you—the work you're doing, I mean? Do you think you're giving the best you've got?"

"Well, of course I'd like to go to France ——"

"I didn't ask you what you'd like."

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir. I don't know what you call giving the best one has got. But you know I work

from eight in the morning until midnight, often and often. Oh, I don't say that some one else couldn't do my work just as well. And I don't say, either, that it doesn't include a lot of dashing up and down Fifth Avenue, and teaing at the Ritz, and meeting magnificent Missions, and being cooed over by Lady Millionaires. But if you'd like a few statistics as to the number of hundreds of thousands of soldiers we've canteened since last June, I'd be pleased to oblige." She tugged at a capacious pocket and brought forth a smart leather-bound note-book.

"Spare me! I've had all the statistics I can stand for one day at the office. I know you're working hard. I just wondered if you didn't realize ——"

They turned into their own street. "Realize what?"

"Nothing. Nothing."

Emma sighed a mock sigh and glanced up at the windows of her own house. "Oh, well, everybody's difficult these days, T. A., including husbands. That second window shade is crooked. Isn't it queer how maids never do. . . . I'll tell you what I can realize, though. I realize that we're going to have dinner at home, reg'lar old-fashioned befo'-de-war. And I can bathe before dinner. There's richness."

But when she appeared at dinner, glowing, radiant, her hair shiningly re-coifed, she again wore the blue uniform, with the service cap atop her head. Buck surveyed her, unsmiling. She seated herself at table with a little clinking of buckles and buttons. She flung her motor gloves on a near-by chair, ran an inquiring finger along belt and collar with a little gesture that was absurdly feminine in its imitation of masculinity.

Buck did not sit down. He stood at the opposite side of the table, one hand on his chair, the knuckles showing white where he gripped it.

"It seems to me, Emma, that you might manage to wear something a little less military when you're dining at home. War is war, but I don't see why you should make me feel like your orderly. It's like being married to a police-woman. Surely you can neglect your country for the length of time it takes to dine with your husband."

It was the bitterest speech he had made to her in the years of their married life. She flushed a little. "I thought you knew that I was going out again immediately after dinner. I left at five with the understanding that I'd be on duty again at 8:30."

He said nothing. He stood looking down at his own hand that gripped the chair-back so tightly. Emma sat back and surveyed her trim and tailored self with a placidity that had in it, perhaps, a dash of malice. His last speech had cut. Then she reached forward, helped herself to an olive, and nibbled it, head on one side.

"D'you know, T. A., what I think? H'm? I think you're jealous of your wife's uniform."

She had touched the match to the dynamite.

He looked up. At the blaze in his eyes she shrank back a little. His face was white. He was breathing quickly.

"You're right! I am. I am jealous. I'm jealous of every buck private in the army! I'm jealous of the mule drivers! Of the veterinarians. Of the stokers in the transports. Men!" He doubled his hand into a fist. His fine eyes glowed. "Men!"

And suddenly he sat down, heavily, and covered his eyes with his hands.

Emma sat staring at him for a dull, sickening moment. Then she looked down at herself, horror in her eyes. Then up again at him. She got up and came over to him.

"Why, dear—dearest—I didn't know. I thought you were satisfied. I thought you were happy. You——"

"Honey, the only man who's happy is the man in khaki. The rest of us are gritting our teeth and pretending."

She put a hand on his shoulder. "But what do you want—what can you do that——"

He reached back over his shoulder and found her hand. He straightened. His head came up. "They've offered me a job in Bordeaux. It isn't a fancy job. It has to do with merchandising. But I think you know they're having a devil of a time with all the millions of bales of goods. They need men who know materials. I ought to. I've handled cloth and clothes enough. I know

values. It would mean hard work—manual work lots of times. No pay. And happiness. For me." There was a silence. It seemed to fill the room, that silence. It filled the house. It roared and thundered about Emma's ears, that silence. When finally she broke it:

"Blind!" she said. "Blind! Deaf! Dumb! *And* crazy." She laughed, and two tears sped down her cheeks and dropped on the unblemished blue serge uniform. "Oh, T. A.! Where have I been? How you must have despised me. Me, in my uniform. In my uniform that was costing the government three strapping men. My uniform, that was keeping three man-size soldiers out of khaki. You, Jock, and Fisk. Why didn't you tell me, dear! Why didn't you tell me!"

"I've tried. I couldn't. You've always seen things first. I couldn't ask you to go back to the factory."

"Factory! Factory nothing! I'm going back on the road. I'm taking Fisk's Western territory. I know the Middle West better than Fisk himself. I ought to. I covered it for ten years. I'll pay Gertie Fisk's salary until she's able to come back to us as stenographer. We've never had one so good. Grace can give the office a few hours a week. And we can promote O'Brien to manager while I'm on the road."

Buck was staring at her dully. "Grace? Now wait a minute. You're traveling too fast for a mere man." His hand was gripping hers, tight, tight.

Their dinner was cooling on the table. They ignored it. She pulled a chair around to his. They sat shoulder to shoulder, elbows on the cloth.

"It took me long enough to wake up, didn't it? I've got to make up for lost time. The whole thing's clear in my mind. Now get this: Jock gets a commission. Grace and the babies pack up and come to New York, and live right here, with me, in this house. Fisk goes to war. Gertie gets well and comes back to work for Featherlooms. Mr. T. A. Buck goes to Bordeaux. Old Emmer takes off her uniform and begins to serve her country—on the road."

At that he got up and began pacing the room. "I

can't have you do that, dear. Why, you left all that behind when you married me."

"Yes, but our marriage certificate didn't carry a war guarantee."

"Gad, Emma, you're glorious!"

"Glorious nothing! I'm going to earn the living for three families for a few months, until things get going. And there's nothing glorious about that, old dear. I haven't any illusions about what taking a line on the road means these days. It isn't traveling. It's exploring. You never know where you're going to land, or when, unless you're traveling in a freight train. They're cock o' the walk now. I think I'll check myself through as first-class freight. Or send my pack ahead, with natives on foot, like an African explorer. But it'll be awfully good for me character. And when I'm eating that criminal corn bread they serve on dining cars on a train that's seven hours late into Duluth I'll remember when I had my picture, in uniform, in the Sunday supplements, with my hand on the steering wheel along o' the nobility and gentry."

"Listen, dear, I can't have you ——"

"Too late. Got a pencil? Let's send fifty words to Jock and Grace. They'll wire back 'No!' but another fifty'll fetch 'em. After all, it takes more than one night letter to explain a move that is going to change eight lives. Now let's have dinner, dear. It'll be cold, but filling."

Perhaps, in the whirlwind ten days that followed, a woman of less energy, less determination, less courage and magnificent vitality might have faltered and failed in an undertaking of such magnitude. But Emma was alert and forceful enough to keep just one jump ahead of the swift-moving times. In a less cataclysmic age the changes she wrought within a period of two weeks would have seemed herculean. But in this time of stress and change, when every household in every street in every town in all the country was feeling the tremor of upheaval, the readjustment of this little family and business group was so unremarkable as to pass unnoticed. Even the

members of the group itself, seeing themselves scattered to camp, to France, to New York, to the Middle West, shuffled like pawns that the Great Game might the better be won, felt strangely unconcerned and unruffled.

It was little more than two weeks after the night of Emma's awakening that she was talking fast to keep from crying hard, as she stuffed plain, practical blue serge garments (unmilitary) into a bellows suitcase ("Can't count on trunks these days," she had said. "I'm not taking any chances on a clean shirt-waist.") Buck, standing in the doorway, tried hard to keep his gaze from the contemplation of his khaki-clad self reflected in the long mirror. At intervals he said:

"Can't I help, dear?" Or, "Talk about the early Pilgrim mothers, and the Revolutionary mothers, and the Civil War mothers! I'd like to know what they had on you, Emma."

And from Emma. "Yeh, ain't I noble!" Then, after a little pause. "This house is going to be so full of wimmin folks it'll look like a Home for Decayed Gentlewomen. Buddy McChesney, aged six months, is going to be the only male protector around the place. We'll make him captain of the home guard."

"Gertie was in to-day. She says I'm a shrimp in my uniform compared to Charley. You know she always was the nerviest little stenographer we ever had about the place, but she knows more about Featherlooms than any woman in the shop, except you. She's down to ninety-eight pounds, poor little girl, but every ounce of it's pure pluck, and she says she'll be as good as new in a month or two, and I honestly believe she will."

Emma was counting a neat stack of folded handkerchiefs. "Seventeen—eighteen —— When she comes back we'll have to pay her twice the salary she got when she left. But then, you have to pay an errand boy what you used to pay a shipping clerk, and a stock girl demands money that an operator used to brag about."

Buck came over to her and put a hand on the bright hair that was rumpled, now, from much diving into bags and suitcases and clothes closets.

"All except you, Emma. You'll be working without a salary—working like a man—like three men ——"

"Working for three men, T. A. Three fighting men. I've got two service buttons already," she glanced down at her blouse, "and Charley Fisk said I had the right to wear one for him. I'll look like a mosaic, but I'm going to put 'em all on."

The day before Emma's departure for the West Grace arrived, with bags, bundles and babies. A wan and tired Grace, but proud, too, and with the spirit of the times in her eyes.

"Jock!" she repeated, in answer to their questions. "My dears, he doesn't know I'm alive. I visited him at camp the day before I left. He thinks he'll be transferred East, as we hoped. Wouldn't that be glorious! Well, I had all sorts of intimate and vital things to discuss with him, and he didn't hear what I was saying. He wasn't even listening. He couldn't wait until I had finished a sentence so that he could cut in with something about his work. I murmured to him in the moonlight that there was something I had long meant to tell him and he answered that dammit he forgot to report that rifle that exploded. And when I said, 'Dearest, isn't this hotel a *little* like the place we spent our honeymoon in—that porch, and all?' he said, 'See this feller coming, Gracie? The big guy with the mustache. Now mash him, Gracie. He's my Captain. I'm going to introduce you. He was a senior at college when I was a fresh.'"

But the peace and the pride in her eyes belied her words.

Emma's trip, already delayed, was begun ten days before her husband's date for sailing. She bore that, too, with smiling equanimity. "When I went to school," she said, "I thought I hated the Second Pelopennesian War worse than any war I'd ever heard of. But I hate this one so that I want every one to get into it one hundred per cent, so that it'll be over sooner; and because we've won."

They said little on their way to the train. She stood on the rear platform just before the train pulled out.

They had tried frantically to get a lower berth, but unsuccessfully. "Don't look so tragic about it," she laughed. "It's like old times. These last three years have been a dream—a delusion."

He looked up at her, as she stood there in her blue suit, and white blouse, and trim blue hat and crisp veil. "Gad, Emma, it's uncanny. I believe you're right. You look exactly as you did when I first saw you, when you came in off the road after father died and I had just taken hold of the business."

For answer she hummed a few plaintive bars. He grinned as he recognized "Silver Threads Among the Gold." The train moved away, gathered speed. He followed it. They were not smiling now. She was leaning over the railing, as though to be as near to him as the fast-moving train would allow. He was walking swiftly along with the train, as though hypnotized. Their eyes held. The brave figure in blue on the train platform. The brave figure in khaki outside. The blue suddenly swam in a haze before his eyes; the khaki a mist before hers. The crisp little veil was a limp little rag when finally she went in to search for Upper Eleven.

The white-coated figure that had passed up and down the aisle unnoticed and unnoticing as she sat hidden behind the kindly folds of her newspaper suddenly became a very human being as Emma regained self-control, decided on dinner as a panacea, and informed the white coat that she desired Upper Eleven made up early.

The White Coat had said, "Yas'm," and glanced up at her. Whereupon she had said:

"Why, William!"

And he, "Well, fo' de lan'! 'F 'tain't Mis' McChesney! Well mah sakes alive, Mis' McChesney! Ah ain't seen yo' since yo' married. Ah done yeah yo' married yo' boss an' got a swell brownstone house, an' ev'thing gran'——"

"I've got everything, William, but a lower berth to Chicago. They swore they couldn't give me anything but an upper."

A speculative look crept into William's rolling eye.

Emma recognized it. Her hand reached toward her bag. Then it stopped. She smiled. "No. No, William. Time was. But not these days. Four years ago I'd have slipped you fifty cents right now, and you'd have produced a lower berth from somewhere. But I'm going to fool you. My boss has gone to war, William, and so has my son. And I'm going to take that fifty cents and buy thrift stamps for Miss Emma McChesney, aged three, and Mr. Buddy McChesney, aged six months. And I'll dispose my old bones in Upper Eleven."

She went in to dinner.

At eight-thirty a soft and deferential voice sounded in her ear.

"Ah got yo' made up, Mis' McChesney."

"But this is my ——"

He beckoned. He padded down the aisle with that walk which is a peculiar combination of flat feet and twenty years of swaying car. Emma followed. He stopped before Lower Six and drew aside the curtain. It was that lower which can always be produced, magically, though ticket sellers, Pullman agents, porters and train conductors swear that it does not exist. The key to it is silver, but to-night Emma McChesney Buck had unlocked it with finer metal. Gold. Pure gold. For William drew aside the curtain with a gesture such as one of his slave ancestors might have used before a queen of Egypt. He carefully brushed a cinder from the sheet with one gray-black hand. Then he bowed like any courtier.

Emma sank down on the edge of the couch with a little sigh of weariness. Gratefulness was in it, too. She looked up at him—at the wrinkled, kindly, ape-like face, and he looked down at her.

"William," she said, "war is a filthy, evil, vile thing, but it bears wonderful white flowers."

"Yas'm!" agreed William, genially, and smiled all over his rubbery, gray-black countenance. "*Yas'm!*"

And who shall say he did not understand?

*Blind Vision

By Mary Mitchell Freedly

Four months of pleasant meetings led to the superficial intimacy that war makes possible, so that I regretted the moving of the hospital and the need of a rest which took me to Paris.

It was there, one dreary evening in late November, that Marston's name was brought to my dim little apartment, with the request that, if possible, I receive him at once. I was about to sit down to a lonely dinner, and the prospect of his company delighted me. Then he came into the room.

I had last seen him with his friend Esme as they stood together waving me good-bye, the rich heavy summer sunshine all about them, though something more than a trick of golden light flooded their faces. They were both vitally alive in widely different ways; and yet they strangely seemed to be merely parts of each other. Esme was an erratic dreamer and seer of visions, and lacked always, even in the unimportant aspects of living, any sense of the personal, the concrete; Marston, in a curious contrast, was at all times practical, level-headed, full of the luster of life.

The man who stood hesitatingly just inside my door was not Marston, but some stone-sculptured image of the gay, glad boy I had known.

The cry I could not choke broke through his terrible immobility, and he spoke, the words sounding unreal, as though he had memorized them for a lesson and rehearsed their very intonation.

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"I had to come. I had to tell some one. Then I will go away. I don't know where; just away. You knew him, knew I loved him. Will you let me tell you? Then I will go away."

It flashed across my mind in the second before I found words that I had half wondered why Esme was not with him. It seemed impossible that even their bodies could be separated.

I tried to lead him to the fire and remove his overcoat, but he pushed me from him.

"No, no; don't touch me. You don't know, don't understand. I've hunted two weeks trying to find some one—you, any one who knew us, to whom I could tell it." He hesitated, and I waited. His voice took on a curious quality of childlike appeal as he went on: "You know I loved him, know I'd have given my life for his, don't you?" Such phrasing was utterly unlike Marston, but I had seen their friendship in all the glory of its intensity, and I knew no sacrifice would have been too great. I assured him of this, and, remembering my nursing, insisted that he eat, promising to listen to anything he wanted to tell me.

We sat facing each other across the spread table, but neither of us thought of the food after the first few mouthfuls. Twice in the early part of his story I filled his glass with claret, but I cannot recollect his drinking any.

"You must think this strange of me, but I'm not really mad, not now. You see, I've lived with the horror ever since they gave me leave—just afterward, trying to find some one I could talk to, some one who would help me go on and finish the things we'd ——

"I want to make it all as clear as possible, but I've got to tell it my own way, and that isn't clear.

"Do you remember Brander? We brought him over once or twice. He was a mighty decent sort of fellow. Somehow, though, I hated his being such friends with Esme, I'd been his only one for so long, you see. Brander was born in India, and somehow Esme found it out; from hearing him curse in a dialect, I think. They

used to talk some unheard-of jargon to each other and enjoyed it.

"Well, one day Brander got smashed in a fight up the lines, along the British front, and was dying. He kept asking for Esme, calling his name, and when Esme got word of it, of course he started at once. He took one of the baby Nieuports; they're fast,—and not much of a target from below. He knew the Germans had a masked battery which he'd have to cross.

"I thought I'd like to see him across the enemy country, so I let him get a good start, and then I went up. I lost sight of him in a cloud-bank, and must have flown beyond him, for when I cleared it, he was behind and below me, and coming toward him a big German fighting-plane.

"Esme's wasn't a fighting-machine, and he should have tried to get away; but he must have seen the German a second after I did and judged it too late. He fired his revolver once, then suddenly seemed to lose control of his machine, and dropped to the lever of the other. He must have thought he was done for, and made his decision on the instant, counting it better to try to ram the German plane and go down to death together than to take the millionth chance of landing and let the enemy escape. He went head-on at the other, and they fell, woven as one machine, just inside the German lines.

"Somehow I got back to our fellows; God knows I wish I hadn't.

"Every man in our escadrille paid in his own way unconscious tribute to Esme's memory. We were awfully and justly proud of him,—it's something to have died for France,—but for all of us the fun, the excitement, of the work had gone, been snuffed out. No one turned corkscrew somersaults, Esme's great stunt; not one did any of his special tricks any more, not even to show off before the new men.

"We got one of those French immortelle wreaths, tied to it his name and the number of the machine he was driving, and dropped it inside their lines. The next morning just at sunrise one of their men flew over our

hangars and threw down a stone. Painted on it in German was, 'Your dead sends thanks!' That's just like them, brutal, and the last word on their side.

"There's always work to be done in war, each day's effort to be made, and the mercy of constant doing helped me. I used to try to forget the fighting and the horrors and go back to the old days.

"Esme never was like other men in certain ways—all the early things that were unconsciously part of him, I suppose. Even as a little shaver at school he couldn't be made to understand the 'why' of a schoolboy's code. He used to rush headlong into anything and everything, and he generally came out on top. He did the most outrageous things calmly, unthinkingly, and we always made excuses, forgave him, because he was Esme. At college the men were sometimes rather nasty to him, partly because he couldn't understand their points of view; and he used to stare a minute and then loll away. He never hurried,—perhaps it was his Oriental blood,—but he always got there, and could make his very lolling an insult.

"I used to wonder just what it was that made Esme a great aviator. He was a phenomenally good pilot, although he himself never seemed to realize his remarkable ability. His losing control of his machine that day was inexplicable. But one can't tell. That high up the slightest thing uncounted on means death. Those days after ——

"A month went by. One morning our anti-aircrafters started, and we rushed to see what was doing, and there, just a blot against the unclouded sky, was a plane turning corkscrew somersaults one after another as it came lower and lower. I went mad for a few minutes; only Esme could turn corkscrews in such a way. I got the captain, and begged him to give orders for our gunners to stop. I must have made him feel the certainty of the wild thing I believed, for he gave the order. It was one of our own machines, in it Esme, alone—Esme in the flesh before us, drawn and haggard and old, but Esme.

"At first he couldn't speak. We called it strain; per-

haps in any other man we shouldn't, even in our minds, have given it its real name—emotion. He was like a girl. When I put my arm across his shoulders in the old, familiar way, he began to weep silently.

"The fellows were awfully decent and drifted away out of kindness, leaving him alone with me. We went to our tent, the one we'd shared together, and there, after a little while, he told me how it all happened.

"When the two machines fell together in a tangled heap, by some miraculous chance he was unhurt. The German was dead before they landed, he thought.

"Then began the slow, torturing weeks. They kept at him day and night, night and day. They never left him alone, not just guards, but some one always near him whose only business it was to *watch* him.

"He was a marked man. The Germans knew him to be our best, perhaps the best aviator in all the Allied armies, and they needed him. They tried every sort of hellish torture on him, things one mustn't think about, to get him to take up one of their photographers over the French trenches, knowing he could do certain notorious tricks which would prove him our man and so render the taking of the necessary pictures comparatively safe. He stuck it out, growing weaker and weaker, until the order came that he was to take up their man in his own machine (they'd used their diabolical skill to reconstruct it), or —— Perhaps if it had been an order to shoot him then and there, courage would have held out; but the other —— He was broken, weakened, driven; he gave in.

"They'd taken photographs for miles along the French and British fronts when Esme noticed the strap which held the camera man was loosened. The man was busy adjusting the films for a new set. Esme pulled, the strap gave way; he lurched the machine suddenly, and turned it over,—his famous somersault trick,—and then, without looking back or down, made for our camp.

"Sometimes one forgets to guard one's expression. I suppose mine showed the horror I couldn't help feeling. He put his hand out to touch me, but I jumped up and moved away. 'Marston,' he said, 'what's the matter?

Aren't you glad? There wasn't any other way but to give in to them. You don't know what it's like to feel yourself dying by inches, a little piece more every day, all the time knowing you can't die enough, and then to chance to be free once more, in the air, clean; you only fifty miles away, and one man between us—one man. What was his life among so many? It's war, Marston; war.'

"I failed him then. I didn't stop to think of his overwrought condition, mentally and physically. He simply wasn't responsible. I had a quick vision of the way the other men would take it, of how I'd try and try to explain Esme's action because it was Esme's, and all the time I'd know the explanations weren't any good. We have a code all our own; not rules, no mention ever made of its interpretation—just an aviator's honor.

"Now, looking back, I can't think why Esme's dropping the man out seemed so hideous. It did, though, and I failed him. He wanted to hear me say the words of welcome he'd counted on, and I just stood and looked at him. He was making queer, whimpering little noises, with his mouth wobbling all over his face, and I watched him. He was suffering, and I looked on.

"After a while the whimperings turned into words, and the words started with giggles. 'Aren't you g-glad, Marston? A-aren't you g-glad? A-aren't you?'

"I turned on him, all the friendship and the memories of the years behind swept away. I didn't know what I was saying. I'm not sure now; something about the things one doesn't do, that it wasn't war the way we fought it to drop a man thousands of feet who was only doing his duty. It was murder. Over and over I said it—that word murder. He wasn't my friend; he was a murderer!

"I went out of the tent to escape his staring, pleading eyes—child's eyes. Even while I was saying the words I knew he didn't understand. He had done what he thought justifiable, necessary; he wanted to get back to me, and I called him a murderer.

"Once just as I started for the mess to get him some-

thing to eat I thought I heard him call my name; but I went on. I needed more time.

"I was gone perhaps ten minutes. When I reëntered the tent it was empty. Esme was nowhere about, but I didn't think of looking for him then, for I thought he'd probably joined one of the other men. Later I got worried, and we started a search. He wasn't in our camp. No one had seen him.

"We waited and wondered. I prayed. Then I found a little scribbled note knocking about among my things.

"We never found any trace even of him or the smallest clue, just the note; that's all I have left of Esme. Here it is:

"'You've tried to tell me your opinion of the trick I played on an enemy. In any other arm of the service what I did would have gone, been all right, been smart. Isn't that what you meant, Marston? But with our boys, because we've chosen to have a different, a higher standard, because we fight cleanly, what I did was—dirty. Well, I understand. You and the other men *are* different; I'm not, but I can pay. I'm going back. Don't try to stop me before I reach their lines. You can't. I go to render unto Cæsar. A life for a life. To give them at least my death, since I can no longer offer even that proudly to France.'

"There has been bravery and heroism in the war, but Esme went back; he knew to what—yet he went.

"God grant he is dead! I tried to make words express an inexpressible thing. All my life to live out—remembering, knowing I killed my friend!"

Perhaps Marston went on speaking; I don't know. I only remember the broken stem of his glass, the stain that was spreading slowly over the white cloth, and the dripping, dripping red of his hands.

*The Flag Factory

By Margarita Spalding Gerry

"The boys are late." The maid looked up from the knives and forks she was laying straight—oh, very straight! She was surprised at the anxiety in Mrs. Gerald's tone. The sun was hardly low yet, that sweet summer afternoon. In following her mistress' glance out of the window and down the street, Greta's eyes were caught by a company of the Bancroft Guards drilling on an opposite lawn. Some awakened tradition thrilled in her and, a spoon in each hand, she gazed spellbound. The mother moved restlessly through the house and out onto the piazza. It was so natural to gravitate to the outside living-room. Past springs and summers her sons were never there long before other boys gathered —happy, sunburnt young fellows in white ducks and short-sleeved sport shirts, on their way from tennis or canoeing. Lemonade and perennial cookies probably had something to do with the popularity of the piazza.

In the intense late sunlight the many flags gave the quiet street a gala aspect. Mrs. Gerald gazed down the suburban vista of trimmed lawns and striped porch awnings. Through the leaves came vivid flashes of tricolor as the big oblongs of bunting shifted in the gentle air.

In the distance she heard the closing whistle of the flag factory, the only industry of the little town. It was seven o'clock. This was late for the whistle to blow, but they were working overtime at the factory to supply the enormous demand for the national colors.

"How morbid I am!" she said aloud. "It will be a

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whole year yet. There was reason to be afraid when the prospect was they would be called at eighteen. It may be over in a year. Things will go on as they have always done. After a while the boys will marry. There won't be less happiness: there'll be more. How heavy the wistaria perfume is! How late they are!"

She wandered back into the cool airiness of the dining-room. The table was quite perfect. "Really it's wonderful how Greta has learned! I'm lucky to keep her. The flag factory has taken so many girls away. Mrs. Carroll says her flag comes from there. It certainly is a good one."

She moved about the room, putting anything she could find out of position back where it belonged. Her desk was littered and she went eagerly toward it, and then stood still with a sudden recollection of some half-forgotten unpleasantness.

"Oh, yes; that was it!" She had a momentary satisfaction in recalling what she had forgotten, before she realized again that it was something serious. She began putting the little tumbled piles of papers into their proper pigeonholes. Two or three of the first-of-the-month bills hadn't yet been opened. She winced a little when she recalled why she had stopped opening them. Now she slit the remaining envelopes with a paper knife and looked at the figures without really seeing them.

"Mother! Mother! Where are you?" That was always Ted's way. He began to call as soon as he came near the house. The next instant she could see the funny little mustache on Phil's lip, that they had teased him so about, and the freckles across Ted's nose.

As soon as they had really come everything began to seem commonplace again. She realized she had been foolish to think their lateness meant anything. There were the little flags on their coat collars, but that didn't have any significance; little primary children were wearing those; they made those, too, at the flag factory. Probably it was her own morbidity that made the evening greeting of the fresh boyish lips seem more tender than usual. The protecting tenderness that had lately

come to mingle with the old-time docility in Phil's eyes thrilled her. But it was Ted that she couldn't keep her hands away from.

They hustled her gayly out to dinner; one grasping each arm.

"So sorry. Met Phil on the way home——"

"We just did an errand on the way——"

"If you scold I'll just bust right out and weep, muzz——"

"Don't you pay any attention to him. He's a sob artist. My feelings are deeper, but I can't express 'em."

The revulsion of feeling made her as sparkling and rosy as a girl.

Greta stepped nimbly. The dinner was almost as good as if it had been served on time. With the first hint of warm weather they used the bare mahogany table because they loved the dainty rounds of frosty lacework against the polished wood. The candles made their own soft radiance. And Greta was like a child in her love of making the glass and silver shine.

"How I love the evening hour!" the mother thought, and was surprised again to find her lashes wet.

At first there was an abundant flow of chatter from the boys. But she noticed they didn't eat so much as usual. And that, too, when some instinct had made her have each dish something they were especially fond of. They had taken so much trouble with the chicken, Greta and she. It had the celery and just the touch of onion that Ted insisted on, with cream and mushrooms—in spite of the high cost of everything—and the dash of nutmeg.

When she met Ted's eyes and realized that he was only pretending to be hungry, and that he blushed to see she had discovered it, she was afraid. It seemed to her that Ted was a little pale. Even in the soft candle-light she could see the freckles on his cheeks.

"What are they going to tell me?" A rush of fear seemed to lodge in her throat. The thought of food was a sickening thing. Yet she, too, hid her lack of appetite from the boys.

"I saw Esther down-town, Phil. She's prettier than ever." This showed her desperate state of mind. She hated that kind of banter—unless it were an unreasoning elemental curiosity that made her unwilling to admit that anything feminine except herself could influence her son. But to-day pretty, coquettish Esther was a vague ally against her fears. She expected Ted to take up the challenge with a zest. But both boys were silent. Then she knew something was coming.

When Phil had only half eaten his dessert—almost all whipped cream too—he cleared his throat and said:

"Mother!"

She started. It had come. "Wait—wait until I ring for Greta. Let's go out on the piazza." Her instinct was to ward it off. But when they were settled there, the boys perched on the railing opposite her, their boyish faces serious, her breath fluttered in her throat. The night was full of soft tender voices. How could she be ready?

"Wait ——" she had begun, when Phil's voice stopped her.

"Mother, we have been down to Guard headquarters. They want a few more men. There's a show that they'll send us first. Think of it, mother—to be the first of our troops to enter France—to show them what we feel—about—about the fight they've been putting up—to help France!" A throbbing triumphant passion was in the boy's voice—that splendid passion of man against oppression, for right against outrageous violence. It lifted him all at once out of her arms, above her—her boy, who was barely twenty. She gripped her hands to keep the first words back.

"But, mother"—Ted's voice broke in headlong—"we're not going to enlist unless you're willing."

Yes, yes, it was true. Ted thought of her first.

"We have you to think of. And we'd wait until we're the right age, only—only—it may be all over by the time I'm twenty-one and have had training."

As if she needed to be told his age—how long before he would be liable! As if there were any mother of a son

in the country who had not been reckoning her boy's age in months where before she had reckoned it in years!

"And I want —— But we've you to think of."

"And we thought "—Phil's reasonable voice took up the strain—" that owning the house, and with a few hundreds of ready money in the bank, and The Investment " (somehow the Western lands her husband had put a little legacy into had always gone by that dignified title in the family) " you ought to be very comfortable. By the way, has Redford been to see you about it? From what I said some time ago about the location he thinks his company would be keen to buy. That surely was a good investment! It's worth about ten times what father gave for it, isn't it? Has Redford been in?"

" No, Mr. Redford has not been here."

" Well, that doesn't matter. You have only to choose your market. But I'd want to be sure you could close out pretty soon. Redford's company is a good one, or the Stover people. Anyway, that land will take care of you all right. Not that we'd go if you are not willing. But I'd have to go in a year anyway. And I'm so everlastingly afraid that I won't get in it until the big work is all over ——"

" I'm the younger. If you just say so, mother, I'll give it up." Ted's attempt to keep the resignation out of his voice was pitifully transparent. Rash, red-headed Ted quivered with eagerness for the splendid adventure, the adventure that every fiber of him craved.

" Don't hurry, mother." The hint of hidden tenderness in Phil's voice—a voice so like his father's—almost startled her. " We'll wait until you're quite sure. We'll stay, one or both of us. Or we'll go if you're willing. We'll wait until you've thought it over—until nine o'clock if you say so," he concluded soberly.

She almost laughed. That was so deliciously like a boy. To deliberate a whole half hour was caution. The question whether or not to send out her two boys—all she had of life and joy—dearer than herself—infinitely—was to be decided in thirty minutes! And Phil evidently considered himself gray-headed with caution. And all

that people had said or written about the war seemed to be in her head at the same time! But the one image that persisted was of a long, jagged cut on Ted's arm, with the blood dripping from it, that she had bandaged when he was a little boy. That seemed worse than anything she had heard. The sickness was as if she had fainted. Perhaps she had for a moment, for when next she heard the boys' voices they seemed far away and she had lost something.

"—— They're holding the places open for us until nine." She had to strain her ears to make sure it was Phil who was talking. "Just think, mother, if they should send us among the *first*, a whole battalion from Bancroft—us fellows who have grown up together ——"

"We won't go unless you say," Ted interrupted. There was a hint of something remorseful in his tone. Yes, Ted understood better. The tie was strong. "But we knew that with the house and The Investment you'd be comfortable ——"

"Comfortable." It was such a little while ago that that word had come to her over and over, about her sweet dear life in the home her husband and she had worked for, and with her boys.

"Do you think you have decided now, mother?" Phil was fidgeting about and looking up and down the street—as she had been doing a little earlier. "I'm expecting Blackburn at nine. We'll do just as you *say*, but it seems to me that fellows like us with no one dependent on them ought to be the ones to fight for our country."

"Just as you wish, mother," Ted's voice quavered.

She couldn't sit still. She began pacing up and down the piazza, feverishly, swiftly ——

"Oh, see here, mother! There's nothing to feel that way about," said Phil, distinctly aggrieved. "We'll be perfectly safe, you know. We'll be kept back of the line for ever so long. We'll be perfectly safe. We may never have a smell even of real powder. It's just to go over with the first that I'm keen about. Do you know, France sent over forty thousand troops to fight for us besides granting us a corking loan? To show those dandy

French fellows—and the English too—how they've held on—that we're with them, and to show those Germans that they can't do it, I tell you! The world won't let them. But we'll be safe enough."

"Oh, my God, my God! Have I got to choose?" Her agonized mind ran back and forth, here and there, like a scared rabbit chased by a pack. "Isn't there any way out of it? To send them away to —— But to deny them that splendid thing, that passion for the good outside themselves—it's God-given. Have I the right to deny them? Have I got to do it? Oh, give me strength—I need strength! I'm blind. I can't do anything but feel. It's all dark. How can I get through my life? If they're taken I won't be let die this time either. If they see I suffer they'll reproach themselves. And I've no right to let them feel guilty when it's right that they should feel as they do. I—I can't deny the right—but I can't live to say it."

"Don't you think you could get along comfortably with the house and the money from The Investment?" Ted's anxious voice was saying. "We've got you to think of, you know. We can't go off and chuck our salaries if you think you can't get along without them."

She seized on that one thing she could give up without a thought. It was like a straw floating to her on a current of death.

"Oh, of course I could get along. I've plenty," she had on her very lips, when she shut her lips tight. Fool, to throw away her one weapon! Boys that they were, to them her agony at giving them up was a weakness. But she had only to make them understand that her food, her warmth, her comfort depended on them to keep them safely at her side, away from all danger.

She could say it truthfully too. For the letter that had disturbed her that morning and been forgotten was from Redford, to whom she had written regarding The Investment. The safe hoard that her husband had confided in for her future was worth not a penny.

Just how the man, long dead, had so manipulated matters as to cheat her unworldly husband she still only

vaguely understood; or just how there had been a false entry by which she had been paying taxes on something she did not own.

But Mr. Redford had investigated and had found, beyond a doubt, that she could never prove a title. Besides the house, which she could not eat or drink or clothe herself with if she stayed in it, and two or three hundred in the bank, she had nothing.

All she had to do to keep them safe was to tell them that.

Some buried undercurrent of which she had not been conscious suddenly spoke out of her unwilling mouth:

"Of course I can get along. I have plenty. I'll be perfectly comfortable"—it flung out almost contemptuously.

They were up as if twin springs had been released.

"I thought you'd say so, mother," Phil burst out joyously. "You've always been a good sport. You can't imagine how queer some of the fellows' mothers have been. I wouldn't have spoken if I hadn't figured it out before. Thank you, mother; you always were the finest ever —— There's Blackburn coming down the walk. It'll be great to tell him. All right, old fellow! It's all right ——"

They were down the steps—down the walk. Their voices floated back to her: "All right—all right!"

"No, no, I didn't mean that. You didn't understand. I meant that didn't matter. I couldn't mean to send you out—to be mangled—to come home blind—I can't bear it. Nobody could expect a mother to bear it. Phil—Ted—you didn't understand—I didn't mean ——" She seemed to be raving like a mad thing. Yet her voice didn't seem to go out. It was like a nightmare, where one struggles dumbly.

"Did you call, mother?" Ted's nervous voice came out of the night. "I thought you said something."

Ted had reprieved her. Suddenly there was silence, waiting for her. If she spoke now she would be heard like the voice of Destiny. The sons of her body were at her mercy.

God alone knows what now spoke in her. But her voice, when it came, was calm and strong. There was not even a quiver. It said:

"No, boys, it is all right. I am willing." And then, again, unconsciously her sacrifice fell into the formula of a nation that, being older, has resigned more:

"Go! With God!"

. . . . . .

A few weeks later all had been accomplished. The boys had gone. The house was rented, the furniture stored; Greta, perfectly calm about it all, dismissed; a lodging engaged where a slatternly landlady had hoped that Mrs. Gerald would be "comfortable." The only work that seemed to offer was at the factory. Apparently that was the only work a woman of her years and attainments could do.

The arrangements were quickly made. The manager was a stranger to Bancroft and he showed no surprise when she presented herself. He was too busy to be either surprised at the type of applicant or exacting; the rush of orders was almost swamping them.

When Mrs. Gerald took her way to the factory, at the hour in the morning when Greta had always brought her her coffee in bed, she was conscious of nothing except a faint but general bodily discomfort. Some ill-mannered young persons, whose clothes dispensed a heavy, unpleasant odor of close quarters and personal uncleanness, jostled her in their hurry. But that made no difference. She was entirely dead and numb and cold to everything. It had been a long time since anything had mattered.

The manager's office opened on the loft where the most expensive flags were woven. Listlessly she looked down the room. On machine after machine she saw the colors repeated and repeated. Red stripes and white stripes and dark blue with its many stars—over and over as far as the eye could see; red and white and blue sown with white stars.

All at once, without cause, something sharp thrilled through her. It tingled all over her, down her back, to the roots of her hair, an ache in her throat, a pain in her

eyes —— And oh, the great stir in her numb heart! She thrilled to it. She was awake—lifted up. She knew all then—what it meant that all round the room she could see such strange workmates, the daughters of Bancroft families that she had known forever, side by side with young Norwegian girls—Slavs—Italians—Greta across the room.

She had not known what things were going on in her native town, what crumbling down of affluence, what new opportunities for the long abased. She saw it now. They were there all together—women with work to do and glad to do it, contentedly chattering while they waited for the looms to start—all together making their country's flags.

The tears started from her eyes—the blessed first tears, bringing such ease! She could feel it too—that tingling uplift that knows no reason. Whatever happened, her boys were safe in their country's honor; and she, serving her country too, was with them. Her face illumined, she bent over the machine to which she had been assigned and took up her task—sewing stars on a field of blue. She thought of all the mothers who had given sons to their country. Each son given was like a new star on the flag. She stitched the little white patches with infinite care and love—straight, true and tight. Each was a mother's son, safe forever on the flag.

* Bill

By Donal Hamilton Haines

Ballard sat down on a pile of boards in a corner of the vast cantonment, bit the end from a cigar, and frowned thoughtfully at the hard-packed earth. Any one of his acquaintances seeing the great war correspondent with a cigar between his teeth would have drawn immediate conclusions, for Ballard was a queer smoker. He used tobacco solely for the sake of aiding mental concentration, and appeared to take no pleasure in the performance.

And at the moment Ballard was distinctly perplexed. He had run against an obstacle, and on his chosen ground he was not used to that experience. He had been with Buller in South Africa, Kuroki in Manchuria, and the Bulgars at Adrianople. He was on familiar terms with divisional officers in many armies, and usually when his way had been barred it had been done by nothing less than orders from headquarters. Yet now he was in difficulties, and the absurd part of it was that the thing had happened here in this huge moiling horde of young recruits who had gained the merest inkling of the art of war and should have held such creatures as famous correspondents in profound awe.

If some young officer, his judgment warped by his new-won sense of responsibility, had made things uncomfortable for him, Ballard would simply have smiled and waited until the stripling came to his senses. But nothing of that sort had occurred. It was simply that he could make no headway with the men in the particular corner of the great wooden city where he had commenced

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his prowlings that were destined to result in a series of magazine articles.

This was what nettled Ballard and set him to puffing jerkily at one of the very poor cigars he carried. He flattered himself that he knew men—soldiers in particular—and that he could make them talk. One of the best stories he had ever written had been won after six hours of smoky silence from a Boer prisoner who had that day seen three sons killed by British shrapnel and his farm buildings reduced to a heap of glowing embers. And yet these boys, still new to their khaki, still full of those mixed feelings which should have made speech a relief, answered him in grudging monosyllables.

"There's nothing wrong with me this morning," mused Ballard, as he chewed the end of the cigar. "And I know when I'm fit. So it's with them. How can I find it?"

He looked up, and saw approaching him, with a purposeful air, a tall young chap with very fresh-looking sergeant's chevrons on his sleeve. Ballard had time to note only that the young soldier looked as though he would be more at home in tennis flannels or the moleskins of the gridiron than in his uniform. He was also aware that he had marked the tall, trim figure during his abbreviated tour of investigation.

"I hate to seem officious, and it's none of my business," the young man began abruptly, "but if I were you, sir, I wouldn't ask any more questions in D Company lines this morning."

"You wouldn't, eh?" answered Ballard, pleasantly. "Do you mind telling me why?"

The sergeant, who had evidently been prepared for awkwardness, thawed at once under Ballard's geniality.

"Not in the least," he replied. "You see, we buried Bill this morning, and the fellows are pretty well cut up. It's the only thing they want to talk about; and when you tried to make 'em talk about something else it put their backs up, and they turned sulky."

Ballard threw away his cigar, whose use was at an end.

"I see," he said. "And I'm grateful to you for telling me. Otherwise I might have prowled about, making

D Company extremely uncomfortable, and with small profit to myself. But I wonder if you'd care to tell me about Bill?"

"Yes, I surely would."

"I take it, from what you say, that he must have been a good deal of a man," Ballard suggested.

The young infantryman sat down on the pile of lumber, took off his hat and shook his head.

"No," he said, "I can't say that he was. He was an under-sized gas-fitter's helper from South Chicago, and, by all odds, the worst soldier in the regiment. But if D Company does anything particularly worth doing after we get over the other side, it'll be in a great measure thanks to Bill, and we all know it."

Ballard, who was one of those rare men who know when not to ask questions although being answered is their business in life, merely sat still and waited, and presently his companion went on:

"Bill was just tall enough to get in. Maybe he was thick enough when he joined, but the work wore him down to about a hundred and nothing. And he was so little of a soldier in every way! A perfect square peg. Nobody had as much trouble with sore feet, nobody's rifle sling and pack straps galled him so, nobody's hip got such bumping from the bayonet. And he couldn't get drill through his head. All right alone in the awkward squad at first, but numbers seemed to confuse him.

"And Bill's rifle was to him just nine pounds of incarnate devil. It wasn't a weapon in his hands; it was just an awkward club covered with ugly sharp iron bumps on which he was always skinning his knuckles, and full of a murdering evil spirit when he tried to fire it. His score-sheets drove range officers insane and kept D Company at the foot of the regiment.

"He was like that all through too, mind and body alike. As a gas-fitter's helper he'd been drawing down nine dollars a week, and the goal of his earthly ambition was getting fifteen a week, so he could marry some girl or other."

The sergeant paused, and Ballard looked at him curiously.

"You've drawn nothing less than a caricature of a man," he remarked. "You've sketched precisely the type that an army's better off without."

"I haven't exaggerated a particle," answered the soldier. "In fact, I could have used deeper lines and still given you a faithful picture. Superficially Bill was—well, sir, he was the limit. As you say, he was exactly the sort of lumber out of which you can't possibly make a good soldier. And yet he made D Company."

"I wonder!" mused Ballard. "Death's a bit of a shock to you chaps, you know, and this poor fellow was a pathetic figure. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is a mighty powerful shibboleth!"

"No," insisted the other, "it isn't that at all."

Then he hesitated for a moment and scratched a pattern in the dirt with the edge of his boot-sole.

"This sort of talk," he resumed, with some show of diffidence, "isn't my line of country at all. What I'm going to say is going to be sheer nonsense, perhaps, but I'm going to say it just the same."

"Nothing that is that insistent on getting out of you can possibly be nonsense," Ballard assured him.

"That's comforting, anyhow. Well, all this huge business of war is an awful facer for most of the men here in camp. You see, we aren't like the men in the officers' training camps. For the most part, they're older. And there's a sort of *noblesse oblige* spirit about those places. I'm afraid we haven't got that. We're here because we have to be here, and there's no real reason why we should have it. There are a lot of us who're here against our wills. You can't get away from that sort of thing, you know, because we aren't all built alike, by any means.

"I'm afraid I'm going to make a rotten soldier, to be honest with you. I've never wanted to kill things, and I don't like firearms, and I've no instincts for the tricks of the ugly trade. But I've learned some of the essential truths of the business just the same. You see, last fall I was playing football, and the two games aren't so dif-

ferent. It's a question of team play; even more so in modern war, I take it, than in football. And team play doesn't consist merely in the ability to reel off your whole repertory of plays with machine-like smoothness. The thing goes a whole lot deeper than that.

"Two years ago we had a little quarter-back who weighed a hundred and eighteen pounds stripped. And at least eighteen pounds of that total wasn't physical weight at all. He had in him some sort of a thing that communicated itself to the other ten men on the team. Not this flashy thing we call 'pep'; something more vital than that, more compelling. Mechanically he wasn't as good a quarter-back as two other men. But he was worth more to the team than a dozen like them.

"Well, Bill's been to D Company what that little chap was to our team. I can't put my finger on the thing he's given us. I don't believe anybody can. I don't believe that up to the time we knew Bill was going to die any of us quite realized that as a group we owed him anything."

"And now you can't pay?" suggested the older man.

His companion had recourse again to tracing patterns with the edge of his boot.

"We'll pay, all right," he said; "but I think we'd all like to have said so to Bill. I guess you've seen troops before, haven't you?"

"A good many," admitted Ballard.

"Well, then, you must know that a company of freshly drafted men is a good deal of a mess. About all they've got in common is their dislikes and their grievances. D Company was no better than the general run. Most of us were unwilling and anxious to hide the fact, infernally homesick and ashamed of it, bitterly conscious of the jolts and wrenches with which we'd had to break off relations that meant so much—just about wreck our lives, some of us. We represented the Lord only knows how many widely separated tastes and instincts, and there was nothing to pull us together except a great deal of dismally hard work. Abstract patriotism doesn't quite answer the purpose, does it? If there'd been a German army in

the next county we wouldn't have been able to exercise all our little pettinesses. But there wasn't; the grim thing was most awfully remote, too far off to pull us together.

"That's where Bill came in. He ought to have been the worst of the lot of us. Certainly the training was harder on him than it was on anybody else in the company. Right from the start it began to raise hob with him physically. And he was such a hopeless duffer at every angle of it that it must have been just as much of a torture mentally."

"Couldn't have been very sensitive on that side," Ballard put in.

"I'm not so sure of that. You find thin skins on queer people. Well, wait and see. At first Bill was conspicuous largely because of his desire to make a confidant of anybody that would listen to him. And his confidences weren't particularly worth hearing. Life for him was spelled with mighty few letters. His job and his girl, that was about the sum total of it. It was a nine-dollar job, and he showed us the picture of the girl. She looked like the sort who'd do just exactly the thing she did. We got pretty well fed up with Bill and his conversation. It was just the sort of thing you ran into just now; every one of us wanted to talk about his own troubles. Nobody else's mattered. So Bill got on our nerves until we were ready to choke him.

"After a bit, though, I think a few of us began to notice one difference between Bill and the rest of us. I know I did. That was that Bill just talked; he didn't complain. He never once said that it was a shame he'd had to give up his job, or that it was hell for a man to have to go away and leave his girl. He talked about them as though they were the biggest things in the world, but he went no further.

"Right on the heels of that I made another discovery. Bill was just as willing to listen as he was to talk. I was just as full of the importance of my own troubles as anybody else, and one day I talked them out to Bill. I did it more in self-defense than anything else, to head off his

endless chatter. Then I found that he wasn't merely willing to hear it, he *wanted* to hear it. And it doesn't take long for a bunch of homesick men, full of their own natural selfishness, to discover a sympathetic ear—even though it's one like Bill's.

"It wasn't that he had any sound advice to give you, or anything like that. Bill's mental capacities weren't great. But he had a way of listening to you that made you know he was sorry and wished no end that he could help. And that's really all a man wants, because nobody can actually help him.

"At the end of a week we'd got all through laughing at his awkwardness and swearing at his talkativeness. Nobody really liked him. It was more like having a poor no-account yellow dog around to wag his tail at you when you were lonely.

"Of course it isn't possible for me to say whether any of the rest of the men in the company thought about Bill in the same way I did, but I imagine they did. At first I sort of envied him. He'd given up so much less than I had. The cantonment seemed an infinitely better place than what he'd left. No wonder he was cheerful and uncomplaining. Then I saw that was just being sorry for myself, which is poor business. The minute I began to think about it fairly it was clear enough. Bill's sacrifice was bigger than mine. That picture of the poor girl in her cheap finery meant infinitely more to him than all my sacrifices did to me.

"When a thought like that hits you all at once with the force of a club, it makes you go right on thinking. The minute I was conscious of the difference between Bill and me I wanted to know the reason for it. Was Bill Hicks so much the better man of the two? Were all my obvious points of superiority worth nothing when it came right down to weighing the real worth of the two of us?

"There was just one way I could get at the answer. I asked Bill the straight question. Why hadn't he married the girl and got out of coming? He just looked at me and blinked.

"'Why, how *could* I?' he demanded.

"That's all. There was no other word spoken between us on the subject. And if you can't hear him asking that question and see the expression of blank amazement on his face I can't make it any clearer. But I had my answer."

"Yes," observed Ballard, "I can see that you had."

"It was two or three days after this that Bill got his letter. He came to me with it because I suppose I had talked to him a little more than any of the other men in the squad. I knew when I saw him that he was no better than a dead man. As I say, the work had been pulling him down frightfully, but what it had done was nothing compared to the work of that letter. He looked smaller, shriveled, and yet his face was splendid—Bill's peaked, pale, weak-chinned face. Because in it, you know, was death, and at the same time something that was bigger and stronger than death.

"'She's gone and married Steve!' he told me.

"For an instant I didn't understand. I'd forgotten who Steve was.

"'What?' I asked, foolishly.

"'Gertie,' he explained. 'She's wrote me that she guessed she wouldn't wait, and so she's married Steve. He was gettin' eighteen per and a good chance of a raise.'

"What in blazes could I say? If a blow like that had crashed into me, I should have gone all to bits or else covered the thing with a Byronic sham heroism. And yet there was Bill, with the iron in his soul, never thinking of the girl's shallow heartlessness, never complaining of his own loss, just measuring Steve's sure eighteen 'per' against his hypothetical fifteen! God! you don't run into magnificent things like that very often!

"Fortunately, I had the sense not to insult him with sympathy he was too big to need. I just let him talk. He didn't even say much. Just told me a little about Steve and what a straight sort of a chap he was, and how Gertie would probably be much better off than if she'd waited for him. And I sat there trying to swallow and watching that face.

"At the end of it, though, he almost did for me. He folded the letter and put it away in the pocket where he always carried her picture, and then stood there for a second looking horribly old and frail in his bagging clothes.

" 'Well,' he said, smiling, 'I won't have very much to think about now. Maybe I'll get on better with the drill and the shooting.'

" Next day—that was a week ago—he went to the hospital, and, you bet, before night most of the regiment knew about Bill's letter and what he had said to me. The colonel went to see him every day, and one of D Company's officers was there most of the time. And this morning we buried him."

He stopped abruptly, stood up, and hitched up his belt with an air of finality.

" I hope you see," he said, " why I thought you'd better not ask questions in the company lines to-day."

" I do," replied Ballard, and held out his hand, his eyes very eloquent as they traveled over the other's straight, trim figure and earnest face. "And, anyhow," he added, " there won't be any need of asking questions. You've given me all I came to learn—and more."

*Behind the Door

By Gouverneur Morris

I couldn't sleep for a cent. I was either wide awake and worrying about things that weren't of the slightest importance, or else I was ridden by nightmares. This was natural enough, but mighty unpleasant. Tavish, the mate, was having a bad night, too. Sometimes, when we were both awake at the same time, we talked.

"Damnation," said Tavish once, "you might know that soon or late the German streak would crop out in him; never showed a sign of it before, though."

"Blood's a thick thing," I answered. "Personally, though, I didn't want to see the man drown. And I'd started to turn away when the skipper jumped—how high is the bridge above sea level?"

"A good thirty-five feet."

"In or out of the movies," I said, "I never saw a finer rescue."

"Oh, that part was all right. What gets my goat is the way the skipper coddled the brute when he got him aboard; puts him in his own bed, has blankets and grog heated special. That torpedo didn't *much* more than get by."

Tavish shivered as if he were cold. I could hear him. "I suppose," I said, "that when you've saved a man's life you can't help kind of softening toward that man—but what a peach of a shot Ryan made! First crack right out of the box! I suppose they felt so sure the torpedo would get home that they came up. Idiots!"

"How does Captain Krug know," said Tavish, "that the German commander—what is he, a lieutenant?—

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hasn't murdered women and children? By Gawd, I think it's sickening, and I'll tell him so."

"I won't go as far as that," I said, "but it sickens me, too."

Tavish got up, stepped into his sea boots, and went out. I think I dozed off, but I was awake when he came back.

"All serene?" I asked.

"Yep."

He kicked off his boots and lay down.

"I keep dreaming that I hear something groaning," I said.

"Something groaning? That's just what I thought I heard. That's why I went out just now. It's the ship, I guess. All old ships make spooky noises at times. The *Robert E. Prith* seems to be a groaner. Did you hear that? . . ."

"That wasn't the ship, Tavish. . . . I'll go this time."

I had my legs over the bunk and was feeling round for my boots, when the groan was repeated. It was the groan of something in awful pain, but too sick to make much noise. It didn't seem to come from any particular direction.

I listened at Captain Krug's door, and then went on deck. The whole sky was on the move, wet clearing-clouds ripping and tearing across the face of the moon. Rags and shreds of the scudding clouds had been caught on the sharp top of Gibraltar. The little bay held at least a hundred ships of all descriptions. I could make out the camouflaging on the one nearest us. She was painted to look like a Nude falling down a stair.

The wind came in gusts—soft and wet. I prowled about for a while, listening; but the groan wasn't repeated.

"Nothing doing, Tavish. I guess it's our nerves. You don't dodge all the subs in the Mediterranean for nine days and nights, without feeling the strain somewhere. Goo'-night, again."

"Good-night to you," said Tavish.

It was anything but!

We made a light after a while, and played fan-tan, and nipped into a flask of whiskey that I had bought in Genoa.

We heard a door shut, and then some one knocked on ours. It was the skipper himself.

Captain Krug looked white and drawn.

"I saw your light," he explained, "and knew you must be awake. Come and visit with me. I'm going to boil coffee."

Captain Krug had swell quarters. A little sitting-room with a shelf of books and an easy-chair and a sofa; and a thing with lots of drawers for his clothes. Beyond was his bedroom; he had an iron bed instead of the usual bunk; and beyond this, mighty cramped, but a big asset, was a jog like a sentry-box in which he had set up a first-rate shower-bath.

"Smoke up," said the skipper, "and make yourselves at home."

In the middle of the table, very nicely stuffed and mounted, was a fine specimen of black-breasted plover. Captain Krug was very proud of it. And when you were invited to his cabin you always admired it.

"With a little teaching and practice," he said, "I could have made a living mounting birds and beasts. I did a real good bald eagle once, but this fellow is my Cheff Dover. In 1916 I came pretty close to leaving the sea and taking up my old hobby seriously."

He moved his masterpiece to the top of the book-shelf and replaced it by a small boiler and spirit lamp arrangement.

"Your shower's leaking again," said Tavish.

The door into the bedroom was ajar. Captain Krug pulled it to, very gently.

"I don't believe a cannon would wake him," he explained, "but I don't want to take any chances." With the complete closing of the door, the steady dripping sound to which Tavish had called attention was cut off.

"He sleeps like a lamb," said Tavish. "I supposed that all Germans snored."

"Not Lieutenant Brant," said Captain Krug. "He used to, I believe; but he had an operation to fix his breathing."

"Then you knew him before?"

"Yes. And I recognized him. That's why I went overboard after him. I wouldn't have done it for any other Boche—and don't forget it."

"He nearly blew us to Hell and gone."

"I know; but ——" Here Captain Krug had to give his attention to the spirit lamp.

"He didn't recognize me at first," said he, when he had checked the incendiary ambition of the pale flame. "I guess it's my beard. I used to shave smooth."

Tavish and I were side by side on the sofa. The skipper's head being turned away for the moment, Tavish nudged me and pointed to the skipper's hands. But I had noticed for myself; they were shaking and jumping the way hands do when their muscles are very tired or after their owner has had a very, very bad night and his liquor, as we Americans say, has died on him.

"Hadn't shaved for some days, though, when I met with Brant, and I haven't shaved since. First trip I made in these waters was in a tanker—the gas caught fire just as we steamed into Genoa harbor—you can see all that's left of the old *Halcyon* on the rocks off Quarto. I started back for New York on an English liner, the *Bristol,* traveling first-class; paid the difference out of my own pocket. There was a mighty sweet little girl on that ship, a mighty sweet little girl. Her folks were New England and she'd been let to study in Milan. She had a beautiful voice—I thought. But it seems it wasn't big enough for grand opera, and never would be. So she was going back home. It was the way she took her disappointment that got me. There wasn't anything in her heart or mind that wasn't sweet and sure. She couldn't be a star? Well and good! She'd be something else; and she'd put her whole soul into it.

"We made a mighty cautious run to Gib. We put into Toulon and stayed all day, and all day in Marseilles,

and we had so many boat drills that I got nervous myself. Then you could tell from the fitful way the electric lights burned how busy the wireless was—we'd hear that subs had been sighted here and there; that the So-and-so was being chased; that the Thingumy had got hers and gone to the bottom. She and I were assigned to go away in the same boat—No. 5 on the port side, and it was at the first drill that I made her acquaintance. She had the shoulder-straps of her life belt too long, and I told her, begging her pardon, that if she went overboard that way she was liable to float feet up instead of head up, and I took a hitch in the straps and fixed her right.

"After that we played around together a lot. And I wouldn't wonder if we made the submarines an excuse for sitting up more than half the night. She was the friendliest little girl I ever saw ——"

"Was she pretty, Captain?" I asked.

"Pretty? She was better than pretty. She had character in her face. I think the key-note of her character was faithfulness. I've never seen another human being who had the same look that she had in her eyes—sometimes I've seen it come into a dog's eyes.

"She wasn't one of your delicate doll girls, but a sturdy, smooth moving little thing—in a big white sweater she wore, she had sort of a boy look to her.

"We'd lean against the rail for hours and watch the coast slip by. And we got hold of a book that told about lots of the places. We put in one whole day off Rosas on the Bay of Rosas—Roses on the Bay of Roses—and she got her mind set on coming back some day and taking the white road that led from the little town to the big hills. 'To Roses on the Bay of Roses—and beyond—by the straight road,' that's the way she put it. It was the straightness of that road got her—it hadn't a kink or a turn. 'And beyond,' she'd say, 'by the straight road to the Spanish castle in the hills.' I'd pretend to look real hard at the hills and study over 'em, and I'd say, 'Are these things *hills*—these blue billowy things?' And then she'd look and pretend she was studying them over again to make sure—and she'd say, 'Why, *no*—they're

clouds!' And then: 'By the straight road to the Spanish castle in the clouds!'

"And I'd say: 'What color is the lining?' And she'd say: 'Silver—they're lined with silver.'

"You know a day's a long time. We fooled a lot about that straight road; but we always came back to the line of talk I've given you. It got to be a sort of refrain. Sometimes *she* said the things I've said she said, and sometimes *I* said 'em. Even when we pulled out of the Bay of Roses we kept it up. She'd say, 'And beyond?' And I'd answer, 'In the clouds!' Or I'd say, 'How about a Spanish castle in the hills!' and she's say, 'It would be nicer in the clouds if they had the right kind of lining.' Sometimes I'd pull a silver coin out of my pocket and say, 'What is it?' And she'd say, 'It looks to me like a piece of lining.'"

It was a good tin of ship's coffee the Captain had brewed. Strong stuff; with sugar and condensed milk it went down fine, warmed the lining of your stomach and took the jump out of your nerves. We had two cups apiece with some biscuits. Krug had a queer way of getting his coffee into him. He bent his head close to the cup and used both hands. Possibly he couldn't trust them to carry the cup a longer journey.

"Maybe," said he all of a sudden, "you think me too old to be skylarking with a young girl. Well, I'm short of thirty. It was losing her and the way of it that made me look the way I do.

"No need for me to tell you about the territorial waters of Spain. A ship is just as safe inside the three-mile limit as she is outside of it. We ought to know—we three! One night of a fierce offshore wind that blew the water flat we got ours; got it just abaft the engine-room and began to sink fast. Nobody saw the sub. All you could see was the looming Spanish mountains, close to starboard, and the lights of a town.

"The English behaved splendidly; the officers cool, insolent and helpful. And it was nobody's fault that when it came to lowering away the Number Five boat, the bow tackle broke, so that she dropped from the hor-

izontal to the perpendicular and spoiled her whole contents, sailors, men, women, children, oars, masts into the sea, and then came diving down into the mess nose first. When I came to the surface she was the first thing I made out; and the next was my girl clinging to her and calling me by name—not wild and frightened, but clear and distinct—to show me where she was.

"I was alongside in a few strokes, and once I'd climbed into No. 5 I reached down and got Alice under the arms and pulled her in, too. I could feel her heart beating against my hands, strong and quick, but not frightened. The wind had carried us clear of the ship, and a good piece offshore. There was nothing to do about it; oars and sails all lost over—everything out of the boat except Alice and me and the water she'd shipped—just enough to wash around. So we rode high and light and made tracks for the middle of the Mediterranean where the wind had free scope and the seas were rugged.

"We didn't say much about the other people. I was happy, I guess. It was wonderful to be alone with her in the boat. It had made the last lap of courtship so short and easy. I just had to reach for her and she came right into my arms and against my side as if she'd practised doing just that. I kissed her wet salty face all over, and patted it with my free hand. It wouldn't matter what happened. If we both had to die, well and good. We were living!

"But we borrowed no trouble about death. We looked straight ahead to what must lie beyond our danger. She said she couldn't have me going to sea and leaving her for months at a time. Wasn't there some way I could make a living ashore? And then I told her how I'd used to mount birds and beasts when I was a boy, and had a real knack for it, and had always wanted to set up shop as a taxidermist.

"We planned how we'd go to live in Bangor or maybe some other big base for hunters going into the woods, and get their specimens to mount when they came out. And we planned what kind of a house we'd have and how Alice could give singing lessons.

"I never put in such a happy night. And the happiest part for me was toward dawn when she got sleepy like a little child and cuddled against me and hid her eyes from the light.

"We were like that when the U-98 bumped suddenly out of the sea right across our path—all wet and satiny like a big fish. She tried to get between us and the wind, and then bore down on us swinging, passed close, running very slow, and laid us alongside with a boat-hook. I'd waked Alice and told her not to be afraid.

"I'm of German descent, my name is German and I'd been slow to believe anything against the Germans. I looked at that submarine with the same gratitude that I'd have looked at an American ship come to pick us up. The commanding officer had come on deck and I spoke to him in German.

"He had steps lowered, and though it wasn't easy or safe, because of the sea, I managed to get Alice aboard them, when one of the Germans caught her by the arm and steadied her. At the same second the sub began to move, and the man with the boat-hook gave the No. 5 life-boat a powerful shove.

"I was so taken aback that I just stood with my mouth open. Then Alice turned and saw what had happened, and she made a break to jump overboard and swim to me. But the commanding officer caught her round the waist and held her."

Captain Krug paused and drew a shaking hand across his eyes as if to shut out something from his sight.

"The last I saw—she was fighting against them like a wildcat, and they were laughing—I could hear 'em—and forcing her down through the hatch. I was shaking my fists and yelling like a madman. Then the hatch closed and the sub began to go under. . . . I guess I would have thrown myself into the sea, if No. 5 hadn't given a sudden lurch that yanked me off my balance so that I fell hard and something merciful knocked me senseless.

"So yesterday when I looked down and saw the commander of the U-98 as good as drowned, you can bet I jumped to save him."

Tavish jerked his thumb toward the bedroom door.

"You mean to say Lieutenant Brant is the same man that ——"

"Exactly," said Captain Krug. "It wouldn't do to let such a specimen of Kultur drown. So I took a big chance—but I guess God helped me—and went overboard for him. I was afraid he might recognize me, but he didn't, not at first. You see, I've grown a beard since he saw me, and I look a good many years older—hundreds of years.

"You'll be wondering how I could keep down what I felt and treat him like a long-lost brother. It wasn't easy; but I did it. I just managed. You see, I had an axe to grind. I had to be very *sure,* before I did what I'd sworn to do if I ever caught him. To know what it seemed to me I had to know—definitely—I had to win his confidence. It wasn't easy; but when he was dry and warm and had had some hot drinks I told him I was damned sorry I'd had to sink him, that already I'd let one sub go, that the crew was very American and inclined to be mutinous, and that either I had to sink him if I could, or else all chances for me to serve the Fatherland in the future were knocked into a cocked hat. I lied and lied to him and told him dozens of things I'd been mixed in to help the Fatherland. And what with the liquor, we got mighty friendly and began to swap yarns, and I led him to talk about women . . . and I said how life aboard a submarine cut off from all that sort of thing must be perfect Hell. . . . And he winked and said how it wasn't always as bad as it might seem—and that sometimes after you'd sunk a ship you'd find mermaids floating round in the water. . . . 'Life's cramped aboard a submarine,' he said; 'everything is fitted into her like the works into a watch-case, but there's always room for a pretty woman or two—always room and welcome.'

"At last I got what I had to hear. After he had tired of her my Alice hadn't lived very long. You see, the U-98 was one of the very latest class and carried a big crew.

"When I'd heard *that* I got up as if to stretch my legs.

His head was forward and his jaw loose. I hit for all I was worth. You know my little shower-bath arrangement. . . . Well, when Lieutenant Brant came to, he was hanging by the hands to the sprinkler and his feet were tied to the grating that drains off the water . . . while I cut his clothes off I told him who I was.

"'You wouldn't remember,' I said, 'but you had fair warning. I told you what I'd do to you if I ever caught you, and now I've caught you, and I'm going to do it. . . . But you needn't be nervous. I know I'm out of practise, but I used to be quite expert—and it's sure to come back to me, because this is a job I can put my whole heart into.' . . . Then I got to work. He was pretty well gagged or you'd have heard him. . . ."

Tavish, with a kind of grunt of horror, jumped up and flung open the bedroom door. The room was empty. Then he pushed open the door into the shower-bath and his head came back as if he had been hit between the eyes.

Over Tavish's shoulder I saw it, too. It looked like an anatomical model for a medical museum—a model to show the muscular system of the human body—executed in a clear and glistening pink enamel.

I clutched Tavish for support. We leaned against each other—and like something far off in a dream we heard Captain Krug's voice.

"I told him," he said, "that if I ever caught him I'd skin him alive; but he died before I'd finished. . . . Damn him!"

*The Unsent Letter

By Gouverneur Morris

He wore the uniform of a major; but the Red Cross band on his sleeve, the stoop of his shoulders, and the fact that he did not stand with his feet at right angles to each other proved that he was nothing of the kind. The uniform was his by courtesy of the War Department. It helped him to get swift access to the dead, and to those who could tell him how they had died.

The War Department had not wished to give him the uniform or any other privileges whatever. "If you want to serve," the War Department had said, "why don't you fight?" The War Department had said this not only with reference to Locksley but to the nineteen other young men for whom the Red Cross had asked uniforms and privileges.

"What's the idea, anyhow?" the War Department had said. And the Red Cross, a Harvard graduate with very much better manners than the War Department, had patiently explained:

"When a man is killed, one of our men will find out just how he died, and will write the facts to the man's mother or some member of his family, and make them just as comforting as he can. The men we want to send will all be trained writers ——"

"Why don't they fight?" interrupted the War Department. "I can send out the death-notices. I can send out ten thousand in a night."

"Did you ever read the letter that Lincoln wrote to the mother who had lost her boys? That is the ideal our men will have before them. The other extreme is the cold-

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blooded and brutal notification which the department sends out. What our men succeed in doing will be somewhere in between. You merely tell a mother that her boy is dead. You don't tell her that he was going forward over the ditch when the bullet caught him, or that he was trying to rescue a friend, or that he spoke of his mother while he was dying. You don't do anything to soften the blow or make the mother proud. You simply give her a smack between the eyes and call it efficiency."

Much pressure had to be brought on the War Department before he saw the light. And it is doubtful if he ever did see it. He learned that the British Red Cross had such a system, and that the whole army and the whole of England swore by it, and finally, though grudgingly and calling himself a soft-hearted fool (under his breath), he granted the uniforms and the privileges.

Locksley had been at the front for three months. During the lulls to which the battle, which for years now has been going on between the North Sea and the Swiss border, is fortunately subject, he wrote fiction, and typewrote it, and posted three copies (the first story he sent was blown up by a submarine and after that he always sent three at intervals, so that one would surely reach the publishers), and supported his wife and their two children.

His wife and their children were Locksley's answer to the question: "Why don't you fight?" And they were the reason why he kept out of danger whenever it was decent to do so, and why he nursed his health and prayed that the war would end before a splinter of shell got him.

He had figured that after battles he could find out, in complete safety, who was dead, who was wounded, and who was living, that from the survivors he could get the details, that, whenever it was practical, he could see the wounded for himself, and that afterward, at some well-lighted table in some old French château, he would piece together the notes that he had taken and write his letters.

Things had turned out very differently. One of the first twenty to be sent out, he had now many men under him, one or two to every thousand soldiers, and in addi-

tion to his field-duties and his desk-duties and his duty to his family, he had many others. They were of an executive nature. If some part of the line had hit hard or been hit hard, he had to gather his investigators and writers and find transport for them and concentrate them upon that part of the line, and, though he wasn't a real major, he had as much work to do as any of the real majors, and, because of the mobile nature of his job, saw more fighting than any of them, and was quite as often under fire.

He hadn't supposed that he would be called upon to do first-aid work or stretcher work, to squirt morphine and antitoxin into the wounded, and to help carry them out of the iron rain in which they were so inconsiderate as to be lying. He hadn't supposed that, in volunteering to help the Red Cross, he was risking his life as much as, and perhaps more than, the average soldier. If he had supposed any such thing, he would never have volunteered. It would have been the height of selfishness. But there was no turning back.

"I'm here under false pretensions," he often thought, "but I'm too good a coward to back out now. I'd be Cain-marked for life. The magazines would no longer buy my fiction, and my family would just be as unsupported as if I got killed. And they'd rather starve because I was dead than because they were ashamed to bear my name."

Sometimes it made him proud to think how many letters he had written to mothers whose boys had been killed or hurt. He had put all that was best in him into those letters. He had tried to make the mother's sacrifice seem beautiful to her. And such was his love of motherhood that twice he had swallowed his hatred of the Germans and written to two German mothers to tell them (in very bad German) how splendidly their boys had died.

These letters had been difficult to deliver; but the general having given permission, Locksley had slipped them into empty bottles, and Corporal Fagan (a major-leaguer in his day) had taken the bottles by the neck and thrown them with perfect accuracy into the nearest stretch of

German trench. Usually when Fagan threw things into that trench, the things exploded, and sometimes the fragments hurt enemies, and the enemies threw explosive things back. But, on the present occasion, after a discreet interval, nothing more dangerous was returned than one of the bottles. It contained a slip of paper on which some one had written, *"Danke schön."*

The work fascinated Locksley when it did not appall him. He felt that it had brought him out of a deep shell into which he had half retired. There was no pleasant château to live in. Life was dour and without amenities. His fine sensibilities were often on edge. He waged steady warfare on fleas and lice. And there was never a day when he could have said, "Behold me; I am clean from head to foot!" But although he had loved, married, begotten children, and seen them born, he felt that now he was really living for the first time.

During the hour which precedes and the hour which follows daybreak, there had been a short, sharp advance over a shell-hilled terrace. The regiment which had been chiefly involved was consolidating its gains, and Locksley was on hand, running more risks than he liked, and helping to locate the dead and the wounded.

It was a terrane full of pits and subterranes. The Germans had moled it up and down and crisscross. Out of their sheltered holes and wallows, it had been necessary to blast and prick them. During the process, certain shelter roofs had collapsed, destroying friend and enemy together. In areas the caved-in labyrinth would have to be explored by the Engineer Corps if it was to be explored at all. But there were other areas (from some of which groans issued) which could be explored by men with electric torches and very flat stomachs.

It was rather like pretending that you were a fox (on a large scale, of course) and that you lived in a lair that had an unusual number of exits and entrances and secret chambers.

From one of the entrances to such a place, Locksley saw emerging, with powerful twists of his big body, Private Strong. There followed Private Strong into the

daybreak certain groanings and bleatings that sounded un-American in Locksley's ears.

"I was just goin' to stick him, sir," said Private Strong, "when the roof caved in and laid him by the hind legs, and now I suppose we got to try and pry him loose. I couldn't manage alone, but if you'll lend a hand, sir ——"

"Of course," said Locksley. "After you."

Private Strong turned, drew a big breath, and crawled back into the burrow. As soon as there was no danger of being kicked in the face by the soldier's heavy hob-nailed boots, Locksley knelt and followed.

The electric torch showed him circles of concrete, of raw earth, of wooden trestlework, a German head caught between two beams and mashed almost flat. As he passed, he could feel the drip from the thing on his shoulder. After fifteen feet, the passage widened and you could kneel upright. A moment later, Private Strong, who was six feet three, rose to his full height and said:

"All right, Dutch; we've come for you."

He took the torch from Locksley and directed the beam upon the head, then the shoulder, and then the torso of a German officer lying face down, arms extended. The light next revealed the eight-by-four timber which had pinned the man to the ground. His legs were concealed by a foot of earth and broken concrete. He made sounds that were somewhere between groaning and bleating.

"That timber seems part of a framework, sir," said Strong. "When I get my back under this beam over here and lift, his beam lifts, too. But I couldn't lift and pull him loose at the same time, and that's why I need you. Now, sir, if you'll get him by the arms and pull when I give the word ——"

"I get you," said Locksley shortly.

It all happened very suddenly. The whole burrow was shaken as a rat is shaken by a terrier. And Locksley, opening his eyes, remembered very distinctly that a giant had thrown him flat on his face and at the moment was sitting on his legs to keep him down.

That thing in his left hand was not, as he had at first

thought, a banana which he had tried to steal from the giant's table, but an electric torch. Intuitively, his thumb pushed the switch forward, and there was light.

"Y' all right?" It was the voice (but not the natural voice) of Private Strong. It was a strained, worried voice.

"All right, but can't get up," said Locksley. "He's sitting on my legs."

"It's more roof fallen in," said Strong. "What'd ya put the light out for?"

"Guess my fingers did it without my knowing." Locksley's brain was clearing.

"Flash her round."

Private Strong did not seem to have moved. Legs bent, he was still straining upward against the great beam which rested on his shoulders. And something in his face and eye and something in the quivering of his great muscles seemed to say that he had been so straining for a long time.

The German officer no longer groaned or bleated. Or, if he did, the earth and concrete under which he was buried completely muffled the sound. Locksley managed to look over his shoulder for his legs, but they were too well buried to be seen. He tried desperately to move them.

"I'm stuck," he said feebly; "stuck tight."

He raised himself on his elbows and looked over his other shoulder and searched with the torch for the tunnel by which they had entered. That, at least, was unchanged. It was still a tunnel, and, so far as the light penetrated, the roof had not fallen.

"You must dig me out, Strong," he said.

"If I give," said Strong, "the whole roof comes down."

"What happened?" Locksley asked.

The answer came in a series of grunts.

"A shell, somewhere up above, started 'nuther cave-in. That's all." A moment later, he added, "Dutch got his."

Locksley tried to think and couldn't.

"Is it very heavy?" he asked.

"It sure is."

"But ——"

Locksley did not finish his sentence. The full extent of their calamity had, for the first time, dawned upon him. The moment the strength of Private Strong proved unequal to the weight that was imposed upon it, they would be buried alive. He felt for the moment as if he was falling through space. There was a rushing in his ears and confusion. The torch slipped from his fingers and he groaned.

"Hurt?"

His brain cleared and began to work.

"Nope," he said curtly. He recovered the torch and had a look at Private Strong. The bent legs, the bent back pressing upward were splendid to see—the thick, foreshortened face of which the expression was stubborn and angry.

"How long can you hold out?" asked Locksley.

"Dunno."

There was something which Locksley felt that he had to say. The saying of it would be a proof to him that he had done his duty by manhood and by civilization. But, for a few long moments, self-pity made him inarticulate.

He was surprised at the sound of his own voice; it was so natural and conversational. The fact comforted him so that speaking was no longer an effort.

"Strong," he said, "I'll turn the light over the ground between you and the tunnel. Then I'll hold it square on the tunnel. The roof won't fall like lightning, and if you are quick and don't trip over anything, you've an even chance of getting out of here."

The eyes in the strained, stubborn, angry face of the private followed the beam of light, but with no great show of interest. He shifted one of his feet a little, with a kind of grinding, heel-and-toe, sidewise twist. Then he grunted:

"How about you?"

"You'll get hold of a bunch of sappers and dig me out. I shouldn't wonder if I came through all right."

He spoke in a smooth, confident voice, which deceived no one.

"Not a chance," said Private Strong.

There was a dead silence.

"What——" said Locksley petulantly, "what is the use of *both* of us getting killed?"

"No use 't I can see."

"You've got a chance—you ought to take it."

"Both got a chance—can hold roof up."

More long moments of silence followed, during which Locksley felt a curious warming of the heart and a detachment from the ultimate horror of his fate.

He got a scratch-pad out of his pocket and some pencils, raised himself on his elbows, arranged the torch so that it illuminated the pad, and began to write.

"Whad ye doin'?"

"Attending to business," said Locksley. "If they ever dig us out and find what I've written, your mother will know how you took yours when it came."

Private Strong felt a dimness spreading over his eyes. He snuffled once strongly.

The pencil scratched boldly, almost merrily.

"Wha' y' keep lookin' at me for?"

"I'm making a rough sketch—to show the fix we're in. It'll be easier to understand."

A moment later, he had begun to write:

TO THE MOTHER OF PRIVATE STRONG. DEAR MRS. STRONG:

Then, with the aid of his littered and numbered sketch, he explained the situation. He went on:

The first time I noticed your big boy was about six weeks ago. His company had done its turn in the trenches and was resting up. I noticed Joe because he was so very big, and because the little girl he was riding on his shoulders was so very little.

About a week later, I came across him cleaning his rifle. You might have thought it was a diamond ring that he was going to give to his sweetheart. A good soldier loves his rifle. You ought to know that Joe is one of the best soldiers in the army. And most everybody thinks he is the strongest.

It must be fine to have him alongside of you in a fight. You simply couldn't be afraid.

He's as gentle as he is brave. I've seen him helping an old French woman put her little garden in order, after a shell had dropped into it and tossed most of the early vegetables over the garden wall. He didn't know much about gardening, and the old woman was very severe with him. He pretended to be very much frightened, but all the time he was laughing up his sleeve.

No use, I suppose, telling you that he's a daredevil. There's nobody quicker to volunteer for trench-raiding or going out at night to cut wires. But one man can't fight a whole war. It ought to comfort you to know that Joe hasn't been a vain sacrifice. When you kissed Joe good-bye, you weren't kissing any ordinary boy. You were kissing a boy who was going to do a whole lot more than his share.

There aren't many quitters in the army and everybody has done the best he could; but there are soldiers and soldiers. And Joe is one of those with a wonderful natural talent for war. If we had half a million like him, I think we'd have reached Berlin about yesterday.

I stole a look at him just now. He looks like a wonderful statue by Michelangelo. The muscles of his thighs and shoulders are almost bursting his clothes. I never saw him look so big or so splendid. I asked him to save himself, but he wouldn't. So he is giving his life, not to save me, but that I can live a little longer. You must not hate my memory. I don't really come into it at all. He's the kind of man who has to die for some one—for some one who is helpless, just as I am, and not much account anyway ——

Locksley paused.

"What you thinking about, Strong?"

"Dunno."

I've just asked him what he is thinking about. He is thinking about you, and how all this is going to hurt you.. And it will hurt you. I cannot go into that. But I know that it will exalt you and make you glad that you have lived, and that you have borne a son ——

"Pret' near through?"

"Yep."

"So'm I."

"You're a great man, Strong. I've been trying to put some of it down. Can you hold out a little longer?"

"Dunno."

The giant was beginning to shake as if he had the palsy and to sob for breath. Locksley finished his letter.

There's not much time left now, Mrs. Strong. Joe tells me that he's all in. I hope God will give you strength in your trouble.

He signed his name and stuffed the sheets into his pocket.

A look at Private Strong told Locksley that their time had come.

"Joe," he said, "you're a great man. God bless and keep you!"

The giant made a sudden, plaintive, sobbing noise, his muscles relaxed, and he fell forward in a heap. The great beam against whose weight he had for so long put forth his strength dropped sharply a matter of four inches and stuck fast. A little shower of earth fell from the roof of the dugout, a few small lumps of concrete, and that was all.

The two men lay for a long time without moving. Except that, at first, Private Strong's great torso rose and fell with the powerful expansions and expulsions of his lungs. He was the first to move. He was blubbering. He sat up and had a first-class fit of hysterics. Locksley, on the other hand, felt perfectly calm and peaceful. There was no sensation in his legs, and he imagined that they were sound asleep. The rest of him could have slept with a little encouragement.

"Joe," he said sharply, "stop that! Pull yourself together and go get some one to dig me out. Shut up! Don't make a fool of yourself."

The tone of command had its effect.

"Dig'y'out meself," said Private Strong.

He had no entrenching tool, and the business took a long time. It required strength and delicacy.

When, at last, his legs were free, Locksley could not move them. They were sound asleep. And even after they had been slapped and pinched into wakefulness, they remained for a long time groggy.

When the two men crawled into the sunlight, their contours were the only human thing about them. They looked as if they had been entirely made from whity-gray dirt. Private Strong found some dirty cigarette-papers and some dirty tobacco somewhere in a pocket that was half filled with dirt, and they rolled dirty cigarettes and enjoyed to the last gritty mouthful a dirty smoke.

They rested luxuriously against the mound beneath which they had suffered.

"Don't know as I ever noticed the color of the sky before," said Locksley.

"Nor I," said Private Strong.

"It's blue," said Locksley rapturously.

Locksley reached out a grimy paw and saw it swallowed in one that was even grimier. Locksley's face twisted with pain.

"Darn you," he said; "I thought you were all in."

The strong man chuckled sheepishly.

Captain Cary, of the Engineers, had dropped in to borrow some tobacco. He found Locksley bent over a scrap-basket and reducing some very grimy sheets of manuscript into very small pieces, by tearing.

"What's the matter?" said Cary. "Wouldn't the story tell itself?"

"That's just the trouble," said Locksley. "I started out to write a thrilling tragedy, and just when—well, you may say just when the roof was going to fall in—the story took itself out of my hands and insisted on having a happy ending. And, of course, that's rotten bad art."

*Infamous Inoculation

By William Hamilton Osborne

I

On Friday, the thirteenth day of November, nineteen seventeen, at half-past four in the afternoon, a young man clad in the belted overcoat and soft-felt hat of the period swung out of the building known as the Thirteen Hundred Block in the city of Paragon City and swung himself aboard the first trolley car that came along. His appearance, his manner, his freedom and buoyancy of movement—all attested the apparent fact that he was in the best of health. He was about twenty-four years old. There was nothing unusual about him—he was a fair sample of the average type of well-looking, well-dressed American youth. A woman would have glanced at him twice; a man once, or not at all. He paid his fare and asked for and received a transfer. This he scrutinized closely after he had procured a seat.

Once upon the car, close inspection would have revealed the fact that his manner had undergone a change. His face, ruddy and untroubled before, now paled. His manner became fidgety, nervous. He glanced about him at his fellow passengers with quick jerks of his head. It is probable that he was much relieved at seeing no one whom he knew. The car rapidly filled up, chiefly with women shoppers. They were all of middle age; the young man kept his seat, though several women were standing in the aisle. He rode upon this car for perhaps the space of twenty minutes. At a trolley junction he

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alighted and boarded another car. This car carried him along an unknown avenue into a strange part of town. By this time it was completely dark. The conductor of this car called out the names of streets as the car proceeded on its way. The young man took his station near the rear door, where he could the more clearly hear these names. He asked no questions. After a ride of about twenty minutes more he heard the street name he was listening for. He rode two blocks beyond this street, alighted from the car, and then walked back two blocks.

A few moments later he sauntered slowly past an attractive bungalow that stood on a side avenue snuggling cozily behind luxuriant foliage. There were two entrances to this bungalow that were visible from the street: a main entrance and a side entrance round the corner of the wide veranda. Above this side entrance a bright porch lamp was already lighted. Upon the portal of the door beneath this light was a name done in square black letters upon a plate-glass sign. The young man could easily read this name from the sidewalk as he sauntered past. He sighed with satisfaction—shuddering at the same time—as he read it: Alexis Arany, M. D. It was the name he sought.

The young man walked on to the next corner, turned and strode swiftly back again. As he walked he turned up his coat collar and drew down his soft hat over his face. He objected to the scrutiny of a group of waiting patients—he made up his mind that if he found the doctor busy he would beat an immediate retreat, trusting to another time to find the coast completely clear. He reached the bungalow, turned in at the cement walk and pressed the button. In another instant he found himself ushered into the doctor's outer office. He breathed a second sigh of relief; he turned down his coat collar and removed his hat.

The name of this young man was Oliver T. Bones.

The room he entered was unoccupied save for the presence of the nurse who had admitted him. She was an attractive young woman, whose sympathetic manner at once placed him at his ease. She had a wonderfully clear

complexion and a sparkling eye. She had an almost imperceptible and altogether charming accent. She was Norwegian possibly, or perhaps a Dane. She held out her hand to the visitor.

"You will give me your card, please," she suggested.

The young man shook his head. "I have no card," he said. Then he added: "I am a stranger to the doctor. My name is Fredericks."

The young woman nodded, disappeared for an instant and immediately returned. She held an inner door open invitingly; the young man brushed against her as he passed through the door. It closed noiselessly behind him. He was in the doctor's private office.

The doctor—it has already been stated that he was a practitioner of the name of Arany—sat at his desk. He was a tall, spare man, of a somewhat foreign stamp. His face was long and pale, lined with fatigue. He was freshly shaven, but the blue-black of his beard stood out in startling contrast to the pallor of his countenance. He wore huge rubber-rimmed glasses, which became him well. He was all black and white from head to foot, this man, with one exception—the edges of his nostrils were curiously reddened. His eyes were half closed and his large head with its artistically tousled hair was resting on one hand. Suddenly he took note of the advent of the young stranger. He cast a glance at the newcomer through his thick glasses—a glance quick, nervous, hurried—almost startled, so it seemed.

"Be seated, sir," he said, rising.

The chair he indicated was under a strong overhead light. The young man took it without hesitation. The physician's nervous manner had the effect of placing the young man quite at ease. He began to feel more or less the master of the situation, without knowing exactly why he felt so. The doctor stretched his arms; he sighed with weariness. His eyes were dull and heavy. But his face twitched, and he jerked his head from side to side.

"Office practice," he mumbled, as though half to himself, "not what it's cracked up to be. I need exercise—

lots of it. Brisk walks—golf. I don't get it. Excuse me for a moment, please."

He stepped into an anteroom and closed the door. The young man retained his seat under the strong light but turned his head to watch the doctor as he disappeared. For the moment he was uncomfortable, feeling that he might be the subject of scrutiny from some unseen point of vantage. He wanted to smoke, but forbore to light a cigarette; there was no evidence that the physician smoked or permitted smoking in this private room. The physician suddenly returned; his step now was light, springy. He dropped into his armchair—worked his shoulders, breathed deep once or twice.

"Ah!" he exclaimed. "Better—much better! A dash of cold water on my eyes. Works like a charm."

Unquestionably he had changed—his lagging spirits had miraculously revived. The young man did not then know what had wrought the difference. Months later, in a courtroom in the post-office building in Paragon City, where the young man sat crouched down weakly in a chair by the counsel table, he learned for the first time what it was that had so suddenly rejuvenated the physician. It was enough that the doctor felt himself again. He glanced keenly at his visitor; his eyes glowed. His face was a peculiar face, the face of this specialist, Arany. It was a gambler's face—the face of a man born to take chances. He and the young man eyed each other furtively, doubtfully, for an instant; but neither flinched.

"What is your difficulty, sir?" queried the physician.

The young man glanced about him at the two closed doors. He leaned forward and spoke in low tones.

"I was told," he returned, "to say that I had come from Portugal."

The doctor flashed a glance of understanding.

"I should like to know," he said, "your name."

"Harry J. Fredericks," returned his visitor without a moment's hesitation.

The doctor smiled grimly and shook his head.

"Your real name, and address," he insisted. Then he

added, holding out his hand: "Suppose you let me see your registration card."

The young man flushed, but he met the doctor's glance. "Is that necessary?" he queried.

"To me—absolutely," returned the physician. "I must know with whom I deal."

"All right for you, but how about me? Where do I get off? That's what I'd like to know."

The physician waved his hand. "You have come here to consult me as your doctor, I take it," he explained. "Well and good. You are my patient; I am your physician. Communications between us are privileged. But in a way you are quite right. Before we go further let us face the facts. Discovery is fatal—for you, for me. It would mean ten years at hard labor in a Federal prison—for you, for me. Let us both remember that and be discreet. I am in your hands—you are in mine. In view of that," he queried, "are you willing to proceed?"

The young man pondered. "I wouldn't be here," he said at length, "unless I was willing to take the risk. That ten years gives a man a jolt."

"It depends upon you and no one else," said the doctor reassuringly. "If you are discreet there will be no chance of going wrong. Nothing can happen—nothing. You may rest assured of that."

He held out his hand for the registration card; the young man passed it over. The physician made inquiry as to the address, the age, the height, the weight of Oliver T. Bones.

He made no attempt whatever to enter upon a physical examination of his young visitor. "Your face," he said, however, "has a healthy pallor. Light a cigarette. I see you want to smoke. You smoke a good deal. But I take it the habit has in no wise affected your iron constitution. You are healthy, so far as you know?"

"Dog-gone the luck, I should say I am!" returned the other.

"How do you know?"

"My doctor; he examined me some months ago."

"When?" queried the specialist Arany.

"Once before the fifth of June."

The doctor smiled broadly. "The other," he said, "a few days before the twentieth of July."

"How'd you know?" queried the youth.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "Two significant dates," he returned. "You wanted to be sure. Who is your doctor?"

The youth told him.

"He found you in prime condition, I take it?" queried the specialist.

"Dog-gone it!" said the youth.

"You are not a drinking man?" queried the physician.

"Dog-gone it, no!" returned his patient. "Don't I wish I was."

"You do not use drugs?"

"Do I look crazy?" queried the youth.

The professional man considered that point interestedly for an instant, then dropped it.

"No examinations since last July?"

"No."

"That simplifies matters," mused the physician. "Within the last four months anything might happen to a healthy man. You might get run down from overwork—or cigarettes. What did you tell your doctor when you asked him to examine you? The truth; it's quite important to us both."

"Told him," answered the visitor, "that I wanted to be dead sure there was nothing to keep me from going to the Front. What do you think I'd tell him?"

The specialist nodded in satisfaction. "How did you fare in the draft of July twentieth?" he queried.

"There's the point," answered his visitor; "I was so far down the list that I knew the war'd be over before they ever called me. Now ——"

"Now," interposed the doctor, "the war is not over, and the new registration scheme knocks your calculations sky-high."

"For all I know I may be the first man called," assented the young man.

The doctor stepped to an open safe. From a pigeon-

hole he took a folded printed paper, somewhat bulky in appearance.

"This questionnaire ——" he began.

"Is that one of them?" queried the youth, holding out his hand. "Like a magazine, eh? Do you mind my taking a look at it? Didn't know you could get 'em; didn't know they were out."

"You cannot get them," smiled the physician, "and they are not out. None will be sent out until the fifteenth of next month. On that date they will be sent to five per cent of the registrants; on the day following five per cent more; and so on—five per cent a day for twenty days."

"Suppose I'm in the last batch?" queried the young man.

The physician shook his head. "You may still be the first man drawn."

He rose and strode round the corner of the desk, peering at the printed questionnaire over the young man's shoulder.

"You are in the real-estate business, you say?" he queried.

"You bet," said the young man.

"The real-estate business is one not particularly essential to the maintenance of the United States Government; you therefore would not be kept here in your job. You are, I take it, unmarried?"

The young man nodded. "Old man's game," he said. "Do you think I want to be tied down at my age? Not so!"

"You are without dependent relatives?"

"Dog-gone it!" said the young man.

"Being in first-class physical condition, a single man, without dependent relatives, and engaged in the real-estate business—that places you in Class One at once. The chances are you go to war, unless ——"

"When would I go, if I went?"

The physician shrugged his shoulders. "Nobody knows; they need you at the Front right now."

The young man handed back the questionnaire and the physician resumed his seat.

"You're sure you can pull this stuff across?" queried the young man.

The specialist nodded. "And," he added, "I am the only man who can."

"What's the treatment?"

"One injection—in stubborn cases, two—with a hypodermic needle."

"What's the stuff?"

"A compound specific—chemically prepared by me. The formula is secret. I am its inventor. Its presence in the human system cannot be traced."

"Does it make you very sick?" queried the visitor.

The physician shook his head. "There will be slight discomfort—and a cough. That's all. This condition will cover a period of weeks, possibly months. This is fortunate, since it gives the condition apparent permanence and enables it to stand up under successive examinations."

"The result?" queried the young man.

"Positive—and absolute," said the doctor. "They will decline to pass you. You will not be called to go to war."

"Sure?"

"Absolutely sure!"

"How much will it cost?" queried the youth.

"How do you stand financially?" asked the doctor. "How much do you make a year?"

The young man told him. The doctor nodded.

"On that state of facts," he said, "I should have to charge you five hundred dollars at the very least."

"Wow!" exclaimed the other. "Five hundred dollars!"

The doctor once more shrugged his shoulders, but was silent. The young man thought it over.

"You would guarantee that I do not go to war?"

"Beyond question, you will not go to war."

"One jab, and five hundred; and all over?"

"The other way round," smiled the physician. "Five hundred, and one jab; all over."

The young man rose. "I'll be back," he said, "tomorrow afternoon."

The next afternoon he returned. Meantime, unknown to him, Dr. Alexis Arany had instituted and completed a very thorough investigation of the young man, Oliver T. Bones. He had found his statements substantially correct. The doctor was ready for him when he came.

The young man drew forth a roll of bills and handed it to the physician. "Had a devil of a time raising it," he said. "I told you I was in the real-estate business. Well, I am, when there is any. There ain't any just now. Anyway, I got this wad for you. You'd better count it and see it's there."

The doctor counted it, placed it in a drawer in his safe and locked the drawer.

He turned to a stationary wash-basin and thoroughly washed his hands.

"Take off your coat," he said to his visitor, "and roll up the sleeve of your left arm."

He selected an area on the young man's forearm and thoroughly disinfected it. He picked up a hypodermic syringe.

"Ready?" he queried.

"Shoot!" exclaimed the young man. He braced himself, and then he added: "Wow!" He said it several times. When he had donned his coat he turned his slightly troubled countenance toward the specialist.

"Just what condition will this create?" he queried. "How will it fool 'em?"

"I thought," returned the doctor with some impatience, "that I explained all that. You've heard of inoculation against disease. Vaccination against smallpox is the well-known form. To-day they inoculate against fevers—typhoid, scarlet fever—the diseases that are likely to ravage military camps. But there is no inoculation against tuberculosis. To the specialist that discovers that prevention there will come immortal fame. Let me get back to inoculation. Were I to inoculate you against typhoid—and were you to present yourself to an examining medical officer with a claim that you were suffering from typhoid fever—you would lose. He would apply tests, wait for several days and apply more. It would be

a simple matter to prick your bubble. But he knows—we all know—that there is no inoculation against tuberculosis. Therefore he must accept as genuine any apparent case of tuberculosis that responds to all the tests. The compound specific that I use creates all the apparent symptoms of the disease; it has baffled, and will continue to baffle, all their experts. Now," he went on, "a few brief directions: Do not come to me again—unless no symptoms appear before you go before the board for physical examination. The symptoms will appear. The instant that they do, go to your family physician, tell him exactly how you feel. He will prescribe for you. Purchase the prescriptions—but do not take them."

Once more from his safe he drew forth his printed copy of the questionnaire. He leafed it over.

"You will find here," he said, "a division devoted to your physical qualifications—height, weight, your general physical condition. Note Question Number Two."

The young man read it carefully: "Q 2. Are you in sound health, mentally and physically? A 2. ———— [to be answered Yes or No]."

"In answering that question," said the doctor, "be sure and make your answer Yes."

"No matter how I feel?"

"Yes. Suspicion is apt to be directed toward the registrant who makes the claim that he is ill. Answer all the questions truthfully except that one. Claim health instead of illness, no matter how you feel."

The young man held out his hand. The doctor took it. The young man started off, and then came back.

"I can't get that five hundred out of my head, doc," he remarked. "Easy money. As I tell you, I'm in the real-estate business; but there's nothin' doing just now. But I'm a crackajack salesman when there's any buyers to be had. I was just thinking. I might send you two or three other chaps—from Portugal."

"On—what terms?"

"A straight twenty-five per cent commission basis," replied the young man promptly.

The doctor nodded, smiling. "The more the merrier,"

he returned. Then he, in turn, held the young man back before he left.

"Tell me," queried the physician, "why it is that you don't want to go to war."

The young man shrugged his shoulders. "Let George do it!" he responded. "Why in hell should I go to war?"

II

It was said of Mrs. Peabody Standish, of Paragon City, that she wore her heart upon her sleeve. She said what she felt, said what she wanted to say, and kept on saying it. True it is that at times she stopped short in her mad career, reversed herself without warning, and energetically traveled in the opposite direction, without apology and quite regardless of the embarrassment she may have caused. She was past mistress of pointed language; what she said made good copy and stood repetition well. She was always listened to. What she said frequently went. She was one of the richest and most charitable women in the city, and perhaps the ablest leader of the female vote. She had used her influence to make the state bone-dry, and when a few café keepers kept up their trade in defiance of the law she joined the dry squad in its raids. Once she jerked an automatic from her hand-bag and actually fired a shot at the most defiant saloon-keeper of them all. She let the chips fall where they might. She had enemies galore. Her enemies claimed that her great passion was an undying regard for Mrs. Peabody Standish. They conceded that she stood for the greatest good to the greatest number, but they intimated strongly that to her distorted vision the greatest number looked like Number One.

One week after Oliver T. Bones had called for the second time upon Dr. Alexis Arany, Mrs. Peabody Standish sat in the tastily decorated living-room of her attractive town house in Paragon City, vis-à-vis with a gentleman in uniform. He was a middle-aged man, wearing the short military mustache of modern cut. There was about this man a comfortable air, readily ex-

plained when it is understood that he was a medical man, who had been family doctor and general practitioner in Paragon City for nearly a quarter of a century. He was an army surgeon stationed at the nearest military camp. His name was Haddon.

"You are worried, Major," said Mrs. Standish solicitously. The major glanced into the next room, in the Standish household called the music room. Through the half-drawn curtains the major caught sight of some one moving to and fro. There was some one. It was not past ten o'clock in the morning, and one of Mrs. Standish's servants was setting things to rights. The name of this servant was Bertha. She was a young German. The major glanced at Mrs. Standish.

"Nobody but Bertha," explained Mrs. Standish as though that settled the matter.

"I am worried," conceded the army man at length. "We've got a tuberculosis scare over at the camp. Serious too. Most of them local men—from here. One or two of 'em I know. Can't understand it. They all passed the exemption boards last fall, and passed our doctors at the camp. Suddenly they're stricken. No reason for it, no explanation. We've had mild weather. The camp's dry—set in that grove of pines. We've got to discharge the whole bunch—send 'em all back home. It's a rotten shame!"

"Possibly," suggested Mrs. Standish, "it's not tuberculosis."

The doctor's glance strayed to the portières of the music room. One of them swayed slightly. But the young servant had ceased bustling to and fro.

The doctor shook his head. "It responds to all the known tests," he went on. "That's my errand here to-day. I came up to take Dakers back with me. He's the best lung man on the Pacific Coast. I can't understand about those boys."

"How many are afflicted?" queried Mrs. Standish.

"Too many," returned the surgeon. "Even with you I am not at liberty to go into more details."

"That is the worst of war," exclaimed the widow.

"There's some excitement in standing up and getting shot; but to lie in camp and rot! Ugh! How I hate it—war!"

There was some reason for this outbreak of the widow's. She was a native of the East; so had her husband been. They had married there. Her husband's life had been lost in the Spanish-American War. Against her frantic protest, at a time when their only child had reached the age of five, Captain Peabody Standish, of the state militia, had gone South with his regiment. He got as far as Chickamauga—died there of typhoid fever. She had never been able to justify his going. In her frantic, impulsive effort to get away from the memory of it all she had left New England—its cold winters were making inroads, too, upon the boy's health—and had fled to the Pacific Coast. She had lived in Paragon City for twenty years. This made her one of its oldest inhabitants. She knew more about the city than nineteen-twentieths of its population knew or even cared to learn. She had money—the Standish fortune and her own. She had invested well and wisely in large properties in the Western city. She was worth two or three million dollars. She was a business woman, with all the instincts of a business woman. Her son, Dexter Standish—young, handsome, smooth-faced slender giant that he was—possessed all her common sense. He had inherited New England ability to make money. To this end he managed with marked success the big real-estate-and-development corporation that his mother owned and controlled. He had great faith in Paragon City, and his policy was aggressive and progressive to the extreme—but his judgment sound.

"Look at Dexter!" exclaimed the widow hopelessly to the major. "First my husband; and now Dexter. And no help for it this time. My money won't help me. I'm bound, hand and foot. And so is Dexter. He must go to war. I feel as though both of us were being squeezed to death by some huge, powerful, unseen hand."

The major was not at all disturbed or astonished at the vehemence of her speech. Nor did he caution her

that there might be some one listening behind that swaying portière. He merely nodded gravely.

"Dexter Standish, doubtless," said the major gravely, "doesn't feel as you do, I dare say."

"Neither did his father," wailed the widow. "They're both alike."

The major rose. "I'm due at Dakers' now," he said, looking at his watch. "If he confirms our diagnosis—and he'll do it—these boys will have to come back home. I can't understand it," mused the major; "I can't place my finger on the reason for the thing."

"One minute," cried the widow, "till I get my hat and bag. This is my Red Cross day. You can drive me there; it's only half a mile or so, and not far from Doctor Dakers' house. I won't keep you but a minute, Major Haddon."

The major waited, and waiting watched the curtain that had swayed. It was quiet enough now—hung motionless. The major stole swiftly across the room and drew aside the curtain. The music room was empty; there was no one there.

The widow immediately rejoined him and they left the house. The major's car stood under the porte-cochère. It was driven by a soldier in the national uniform. At her destination the widow alighted and held out her hand.

"You give my love to Rita," she exclaimed. "Tell her I never see her and never hear from her. And my regards to Rita's aunt. It's well Rita's got a chaperon, even though she is engaged. Dexter's at your house every night in the week and all day Sunday. Says he just can't keep away from her, that's all. I give him loads of messages for Rita; and probably she gives him loads to give to me. I never get 'em, if she does. And when I call she's out; Girls' War Bazaar, I take it. And when she calls I'm out. That reminds me," she went on: "I've got to arrange a jiujitsu fight for the tobacco fund. A fight to the finish—I believe that's what they call it; and I've got to do the work."

"A very proper kind of a fight—to the finish," laughed

the major. "You arrange it. I'll see it. I'm aching for a fight."

"I'll be there myself—in the front row," laughed the widow as she left him.

She bustled into the chapter meeting, took her allotted place, hastily doffed her furs and donned her uniform. She was late, and worked like mad for a while, silently, to catch up with the rest. Silently also, because she was thinking, girlishly, of that Captain Peabody Standish who had gone to war some twenty years before. Finally she had time to look about her, and, as was her wont, began to talk.

"It's a shame," she ejaculated; "I'd give every dollar I possess if I could only keep my boy from going to war."

Two or three of her friends turned to her in amazement.

"And you a Standish!" they cried in unison.

"My husband was the Standish," returned the widow. Then she added: "Terrible line of talk, isn't it? But I've got to say it. I'd give every dollar if I could keep my boy at home."

Mrs. Standish's advent started the ball a-rolling. The Red Cross chapter immediately plunged full-tilt into the war. Scandal, gossip, rumor, tragedy, blessing, condemnation, invective—all these filled the air. Six women present confessed to a definite knowledge as to how to run the National Army; each of the fifteen present explained clearly how the Red Cross should be run—with one exception. One of the women present, a comparative stranger, a Mrs. Ober, distinguished herself by her unbroken silence. When the session of three hours and a half was up, however, this woman timidly approached Mrs. Standish and whispered in her ear.

"I feel the same way about my son as you do about yours," she said. And then she added strangely: "Maybe there is something I can do to help."

She drew Mrs. Standish into a corner.

"I am not queer—or crazy," she went on in a low voice, "and I can give you no message save this one:

If your eyes meet anywhere the one word Portugal I suggest that you obey the summons."

She placed a finger on her lips and was gone. Mrs. Standish watched her go, wondering.

"Who is she?" queried Mrs. Standish of her friends, without, however, thinking fit to repeat the woman's words. "I suggest," she went on, "that her dressings be examined. They may contain powdered glass. We cannot be too careful. It seems to me she bears a sort of German name."

All through the excitement of preparing for the jiujitsu fight Mrs. Standish continued to wear her heart upon her sleeve. She adopted a slogan of her own manufacture—she told everybody everywhere that she'd give everything she had to keep her son at home. She usually hedged when taken to task by saying that she was well aware, as was everybody else, that her money couldn't keep him home; so what odds, anyway?

At dinner one evening, while they were alone—save for the presence of the harmless Bertha—Dexter Standish reproached his mother mildly for making her oft-repeated wild assertion.

"I've got to go; so there's an end to it," he said.

"But," she insisted, "I only say it to my friends. And it's true; if I could keep you home and give up all my wealth I'd do it in a minute."

"You mean," he suggested, "if it could be done with honor."

"Oh, of course, I suppose so," returned the widow. "Why—even Bertha feels the way I do. Bertha, how much would you give to keep Mr. Dexter here from going away to war?"

Bertha made a calculation. "Oh, maybe fifty dollars," she returned.

"There!" said his mother triumphantly; "even Bertha would give fifty dollars to have you stay at home. We all feel the same."

Bertha blushed and giggled and went down to tell the story belowstairs. That night several people in the city talked of Mrs. Standish's unusual assertion. Some of

them may have wondered vaguely whether she would get her wish.

The next morning included in Mrs. Standish's voluminous mail there was a typewritten envelope, bearing a local postmark and containing a single sheet of paper, on which was typed a single line:

"Tell Doctor Arany that you come from Portugal."

Three days after that Dexter Standish himself entered the private office at Doctor Arany's bungalow. Doctor Arany welcomed him warmly and waved him to a seat.

"Your good mother and myself," said the doctor, who to Dexter seemed somewhat old and worn, "had a very pleasant interview. She is a very level-headed woman. I had gathered the impression that she had the reputation for being a trifle indiscreet in her conversation—her political career has reeked with invective and anathema—but ——"

"My mother," nodded Dexter, "is an anomaly. If she wants to keep anything to herself you may rest assured she does it. Latterly there's been a distinct method in her madness. She wanted something; she didn't dare to ask how to go about it. She spread her gospel far and wide—actually without directing the least suspicion toward herself. She got the information that she looked for. It was volunteered."

The doctor rose, bowed, and excused himself a moment. He stepped into the anteroom. Inside of three minutes he was back—smiling, debonair.

Dexter Standish stared at him. "You look—different," he exclaimed. "Younger, somehow—a different man."

"It is the cold water—on my eyes," nodded the physician. "My tired eyes make my entire nervous system tired. Let me ask you," he went on, "whether you have any idea who may have sent the slip of paper that linked my name with the mention of the word Portugal. Your mother had an idea it was a woman of the name of Ober."

Dexter Standish smiled. "I have an idea it was our

waitress, Bertha," he said. "She's probably one of the Kaiser's underground allies."

"But that would not connect her up with me," said the doctor, shaking his head. "And besides, I am told that it was due to the intervention of a young man of the name of Bones."

"Bones?" queried Dexter Standish.

"Bones," repeated the physician. "The name is confidential. Do you know whether he may have sent the message? It is of importance; but not too much."

"I do not know," said Dexter.

The doctor, who had been studying his visitor, waved the matter aside. His manner toward Standish, be it said, was vastly different from his manner toward the young man Bones. His tone was serious; he spoke with convincing sincerity and earnestness.

"Mr. Standish," said he, "believe me, I am not so mercenary or so businesslike about this matter as I may seem to be. Let me entreat you to believe that I do not assist where my sympathies have not been first engaged. Will you tell me why you do not care to go to war? In your case it is not, I take it, fear!"

"Doctor," said young Standish, "I am one of the most well-to-do and best-known young men in this city. My mother's political career and her wealth have given me unusual prominence. I am, furthermore, rich in my own right. Being such, I am a constant mark. I have been blackmailed half a dozen times. All this has made me wary. I've got to know, somehow, that you are not operating such a scheme. I've got to know, further, that you are not a member of the secret service. I've got to be sure of you before I actually commit myself. You understand?"

The doctor nodded. "You are reasonable," he said, "and I am trying to think how to convince you. I think I shall insist upon your examination of this room. You have sufficient mechanical intelligence to discover the presence of a dictograph, even though cleverly concealed. There is no one here—or in the house—save Miss Nilsson, my assistant, and myself. I assure you ——"

Dexter Standish held up his hands. He had scrutinized the doctor closely. "I think," he said slowly, "that I can take a chance. I believe you are safe. If you are not, sir, then you will have ruined the lives of three people at the least, dragged my reputation in the mud, and consigned me to a prison unless I can put a bullet through my brain before that comes. The risk I take is deadly."

"The risk depends on you alone—and on your mother," said the doctor; "be well assured of that. You and she hold this matter in the hollow of your hands." He dismissed that subject. "Why is it," he repeated, "that you do not want to go to war?"

Dexter Standish hesitated for an instant. While he did so the doctor looked him over. Standish was a magnificent specimen—tall and straight and spare. His skin was clear as a baby's, though tinged with brown, and ruddy from the wind. His eyes were clear. There was a pleasing irregularity about his features that made him a trifle more attractive in appearance than he might have been if merely handsome. He was still young. Upon him was the indecision of youth. Romance emanated from him. He possessed the unexplainable quality of magnetism. The doctor noted all these things swiftly and with unerring judgment. Then Standish pulled out his wallet and drew from it the picture of a girl.

"I feel justified in mentioning her," he said, still pondering on the propriety of it. "The situation is unusual. My chief reason for not wanting to go to war is this—I want to live with her."

The doctor took the picture; his eyes glowed with appreciation. "Miss Marguerita Haddon," he said, nodding. "I have seen her picture in the local papers. She is the doctor's daughter, is she not? Major Haddon's?"

"Ah," answered Dexter Standish; "and there's the rub. A clever man, the major. I've got to be sure he doesn't even suspect me in this matter. You see, I'm up against it every way."

"He cannot suspect—unless you let him know," reiterated the specialist firmly. "I do not guess at these things; I know. My handiwork already has convinced

him; not only him but Dakers, our best man on pulmonary trouble. Already they are beginning to send my men back home. Let me ask you," he went on, waving all doubt aside, "how soon in all probability will Major Haddon go to France?"

"In about six weeks, he thinks," said Dexter.

The doctor once more glanced at Rita Haddon's picture. He was a keen judge of pretty women.

"Why," he suggested, "don't you marry this girl—marry her at once? You are engaged to her, I understand; have been for some time."

Dexter shrugged his shoulders. "She will marry me," he returned, "only on the eve of my leaving for France. She will do nothing that will keep me from my duty. Her idea—not mine, you may believe."

"A little patriot first," said the doctor admiringly, "and a sweetheart next. A very fetching sweetheart. I don't wonder that you prefer to—stick round."

Dexter flushed; he didn't relish these remarks. The doctor handed back the photograph and Dexter returned it to his pocket.

"If she should ever suspect," said Dexter, "that I am doing this—this dastardly thing—she would die, I think. And, as I've told you, I should kill myself—unless they got me first."

"Suppose," mused the doctor, following the course of his own thoughts, not that of Dexter's, "suppose you're called; we'll say suppose, upon examination, you find yourself rejected on account of this physical condition—will she still marry you?"

"She will marry me the instant that she knows she does not interfere with the performance of my duty," returned Dexter. "I've been all over the ground with her. She's afraid the Government will not take married men, even though they waive exemption. She wants me to go. But she will marry me at the last moment, not before. If they won't take me, if I'm rejected, of course she'll marry me. I am positive of that."

"Her father is a surgeon," went on the specialist. "What about him? Would he permit the marriage if he

believed you infected with tuberculosis? What about that?"

"Doctor," said Dexter, holding the other man's glance with his own, "I am this girl's hero. She wants me just as much as I want her. The major is to be left out of the account. If I am rejected or discharged she will marry me; she will insist upon it, to nurse me back to health. That situation doesn't worry me at all."

The doctor was satisfied on that score. "You have other reasons for coming to me," he said. "Your mother——"

"Yes," interposed Dexter; "my mother; and I want to live my life. I've just begun. I'm successful; everything's opening up before me. I don't want to leave my life unfinished. I don't fear death; I merely want a chance at life. Tell me," he said eagerly, "just what you intend to do for me. Let me know it all."

The physician explained to Dexter Standish all that he had explained to Oliver T. Bones.

"And there is no permanent danger?" queried Dexter anxiously. The physician pressed a button at his desk. The door opened; his fair-haired assistant entered. The doctor gave her a brief direction. While her back was turned he glanced meaningly at his visitor. When she had finished her brief task the girl turned, looked full at Dexter and brushed past him as she left the room. Behind her trailed a trace of pleasing perfume.

"You are a picture of health," said the doctor to young Standish, "and I wanted you to take notice of another—my nurse, Miss Nilsson. Can you conceive of anything being the matter with that girl? Yet she has passed through my treatment five times in succession; and not a trace. As soon as the compound is worked free of the system—and vice versa—it is all over. I might send you to two or three young men about town—patients of mine who have undergone this treatment. But—it would be unsafe for you—for them. Temporary discomfort, yes. Three months at the longest. In your case, upon your rejection or discharge, I suggest recuperation—as a blind. The Adirondacks, in the East, perhaps; or your

mother's home state—in the Berkshires. Somewhere where your recovered state of health will not excite undue comment. A honeymoon—alone with your bride. Your surgeon father-in-law very likely at the Front. Paradise! When you return, the war possibly will be at its end. At any rate you will be a very much married man, possibly with a child; certainly with a child. Simple, is it not?"

Young Standish nodded. He was convinced.

"What about terms?" he asked at length.

The doctor smiled. "Mr. Standish," he said, "your good mother has said on several occasions that she would give all her private fortune if she could prevent you from going to the Front. Foolish! Were I of a grasping nature I should be inclined to place a high price upon my services in this connection. As it is, I shall be reasonable. My suggestion is—a hundred thousand dollars."

Standish was startled at the suggestion. "I should have said twenty-five thousand at the most!" he exclaimed. "Surely, were it the most delicate operation in the world it would not cost that much."

The doctor remained politely but stubbornly silent.

"Well then," said the young man finally, "suppose you make it fifty and we'll call it square."

"Suppose," returned the doctor with a grim smile, "that we split the difference between fifty and a hundred thousand, and call it seventy-five thousand dollars. In the circumstances that is as low a figure as you can expect."

"In the circumstances," conceded the young man, "I suppose I'll have to pay it. Cash, of course. Say when."

"Here—to-morrow night," returned the doctor.

The young man shook his head. "Not here!" he exclaimed. "Don't misunderstand me, doctor. My mistrust is not of you. But you have been furnishing this treatment for months; it is you who may be watched. At any moment—to-morrow night perhaps—they may descend upon this place."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the doctor.

"God forbid my being here when they do," returned

Standish. "I can't take the chance. Consummate the matter at my house. At any rate, they're not after me—not yet. My house—I'll send the servants out. To-morrow night. My house—at nine o'clock."

The physician considered it carefully.

"Good," he said finally; "your house, to-morrow night, at nine."

At nine o'clock to the minute Alexis Arany, M. D., pressed the button at the Standish home. He was admitted by Dexter Standish himself and was conducted through a long wide hall, through two richly furnished rooms into a third. This latter was a smaller room, in which a wood-fire burned brightly. This room was occupied by the widow Standish.

"You know my mother," said Dexter. "This is my den. A bit disordered, I'm sorry to say. We're redecorating, and they've picked on me first."

"I noted," said the doctor, "the faint odor of paste and calcimine. That," he suggested, pointing to the door by which they had entered, "is the only door?"

The young man closed it, nodding. "There is no danger of interruption," went on Dexter; "the servants are all out. If it transpires that you were followed here—if we are disturbed at all we can give a perfectly reasonable explanation of your visit."

He spread out upon the flat top of his mahogany desk maps of a new portion of the city, intended for the erection of fashionable residences.

"You are intensely interested in the Standish Addition," explained Dexter; "you are about to invest your money in a portion of the tract."

"In fact," smiled the physician, "I am here to pay a considerable portion of the purchase price and to take my deed as soon as it can be prepared."

"Excellent!" laughed Dexter. "Now," he went on, "my lady mother, who sits there, insists upon financing your transaction. She has seventy-five thousand dollars in that innocent-looking little bag."

Mrs. Standish, bustling with nervous activity, drew her chair up to the desk.

"Dexter is right, doctor," she exclaimed; "this is my funeral, and I intend to take all responsibility for it. I have the money here. But I want to find out for myself all the details. Except for my first brief interview with you I've gotten all this at second hand. One or two points I would like to have made clear."

The doctor patiently resigned himself to cross-examination; it was part consideration for the fee he was about to get. The widow Standish was finally convinced.

She fumbled in her bag and produced a roll of bills. "Count them," she commanded. The doctor counted them.

"Seventy-five thousand," he finally announced.

"Now," said Dexter, "you'd better secrete those bills at once somewhere in some pocket, against the event that anybody should arrive."

The doctor did so. Then he rose. "Where can I wash my hands?" he queried. Dexter led him to a stationary wash-stand in the corner of the room. Placed on a shelf of a medicine closet hung upon the wall was a bottle of grain alcohol and a roll of absorbent cotton.

"No trouble to show goods," said the widow Standish with a somewhat hysterical laugh. "You find us all prepared."

The doctor dried his hands after washing them thoroughly, and then saturated a piece of cotton in alcohol.

He turned to Dexter. "Keep on your coat," he suggested, "to cover the possibility of interruption. Draw up your left-hand sleeves as far as they will go."

He carefully sponged off an area on Dexter's forearm. He stepped back to the basin to lay down the cotton and prepare his syringe. "I sterilized this needle carefully before I came," he said, working busily with his back to Dexter; "but I'll wash the point once more to make assurance doubly sure."

Behind him there was some sudden movement. "Doctor," exclaimed Dexter Standish sharply, "quick—come here!"

The physician, needle in hand, turned swiftly and faced the younger man.

He found himself glancing into the muzzle of an automatic.

"Doctor," said Dexter Standish, "throw up your hands! I am a dead shot. Quick!"

The physician without the slightest hesitation held up his hands. In one of them he still clutched the hypodermic needle. Holding up his hands he glanced swiftly about the room. He noted instantly that the presence of the woman made for his safety. Once he could reach her he could use her as his shelter. He had a further reason for making the sudden movement that he contemplated. Still holding up his hands and without an instant's warning he sprang toward the widow Standish. He hadn't noticed that she also held a leveled pistol in her hand. At his first move she pulled the trigger. The doctor reeled and dropped into a chair. She had shot him in the arm.

"Doctor," cried Dexter swiftly, "everybody—quick!"

And then, to the amazement of Alexis Arany, crouched down in the chair clutching at his arm—to his amazement three men plunged through the wall, darted across the room and seized him. The doctor grunted with pain as they did so. But he looked keenly at Dexter Standish.

"Camouflage?" he queried.

"Yes," admitted Dexter; "that space there really is a doorway. We framed it up—repapered that end of the room. They've been standing on the other side of the wall paper listening to everything we had to say. Simple, wasn't it? Boys," went on Dexter, "you'll find that roll of bills in his trousers pocket." He turned to two people who had entered with a fourth operative through the other door. "Doctor," cried Dexter to the man in army uniform; "Rita—everybody! You'll have to testify. Watch this man take that roll of bills from the doctor here. Everybody keep the list of numbers that we made. That's right. Now," he said, seizing a large envelope that he had procured for the purpose, "seal them up in this. So far, so good. Doctor," he said to Major Haddon, "will you be so good as to dress this man's arm?"

The major stepped to the fore. "The wound will

wait, it isn't bleeding much," he said. "I want this man searched thoroughly first."

"Frisk him for everything he's got, Jerry," said the leader of the secret-service squad. "Perhaps the ladies ——"

"Rita!" called Dexter to the girl. The girl, her pretty face pale with excitement, stepped to his side. "Rita," said Dexter, "look at your quarry—yours! This is the result of effective leadership. Your father and my mother and myself—we did exactly as you told us—to the letter. Without a single slip. Your scheme. And here's the man the Government has tried to get for many months. Without a single slip!"

"A few slips on the part of Dr. Alexis Arany," cried the shrill voice of Dexter's mother. "You gentlemen may accuse him of any crime you please. I accuse him of rank stupidity in believing for an instant that he could corrupt a Standish, or the mother of a Standish, or the widow of a Standish. I accuse him of putting his head in a noose. Not for one instant," said the lady proudly, "did he suspect that I was commissioned by the secret-service heads in Washington to—what do they call it?—to get him with the goods."

She uncocked her gun, dropped it into her bag, caught her future daughter-in-law about the waist and bustled out of the room.

"Search him!" commanded the major when the door was shut.

In spite of himself, Doctor Arany smiled at the widow's speech. "Caught with the goods," he repeated faintly. "What goods; what goods?"

"His snuff-box!" exclaimed the major, as it came to light. "Here, hand me that!"

"No!" cried Arany.

"Yes!" said the major. He seized the snuff-box and opened it.

"I thought so," he mused, examining the white powder it contained.

"Doctor," pleaded the prisoner, "man to man: I can have that back again?"

The major slipped it into his own pocket.

"Now," he said sharply, "see if you can find that hypodermic needle. He's got it somewhere on him, sure."

But it wasn't somewhere on him; it wasn't anywhere. They didn't find it. There was a reason for this. For, in the instant before the widow Standish had discharged her weapon, unseen by any save himself, Arany had deftly dropped the needle into the blazing fire.

A few days later Major Haddon and his prospective son-in-law stepped into the office of the United States district attorney.

"We've just been to the county jail to see him," said the major. "He's a sight. Cocaine; that's his trouble. He's dependent on it. And he hasn't had any since we took him. He hasn't even been shaved—the jail barber is afraid he'll cut him; he can't keep still. What have you found?"

The district attorney shrugged his shoulders. "Nothing—at his office," he said; "results negative. No mysterious compound. The girl's beat it; disappeared. We've got young Bones; he's given up all he knows. But—what does he know? What have we got against this man Arany, anyway? Is he a common swindler—a joker? Taking people's money and giving them nothing in return? What did he have in that hypodermic needle? That's what I want to know."

The major nodded. He pulled out Arany's snuff-box. "Send for him," he suggested to the district attorney. "There's a way of getting something out of him at any rate." He handed the district attorney a list of names. "Those are the men—a few—that I suspect he's treated. They won't talk, and we've got no evidence. But—tell him any lies you want to. We've got to have the truth."

The district attorney nodded. He pressed a button and gave an order. The three men smoked, chatting, for the space of twenty minutes. At the end of that time two men in uniform escorted Arany into the room. He

seemed a nervous wreck; he was on the verge of collapse. He was suffering acutely, that was plain.

The district attorney nodded to Arany and flashed a signal to the officers. They were to stand behind him—hands on his shoulders. They obeyed the glance and stationed themselves behind the prisoner, ready for emergencies.

The district attorney drew forth a bunch of yellow papers fastened with a clip. He leafed them over. He puffed slowly on his cigar.

"Doctor Arany," he said, "we've rounded up young Bones. Let me read you what he says."

He read it; it was a genuine deposition. It was all he had. Arany listened, but impatiently. He was more interested in his own deplorable condition than he was in accusing depositions. The district attorney leafed over some other papers. "We've got Bruno; we've got Garner; and—oh, yes! We've got young Atkinson. Dakers, our specialist, banks on Atkinson."

Major Haddon drew forth the Arany snuff-box, opened it casually; snapped it shut. Opened it again, snapped it shut again. Arany gathered himself together and made one terrific dive; but the heavy hands of the men in uniform held his slender frame as in a vise.

"I want that snuff-box—quick!" cried Arany. He struggled like a madman. His struggles were wholly ineffectual. "For God's sake—one pinch!" he cried. "Just one!"

"Arany," said the district attorney, with his own eyes fixed upon the snuff-box, "of course it's my duty to warn you that anything you say here may be used against you. We've got a case against you; let me tell you that. We can make it by ruining the reputation and the careers and blackening the names and memories forever of a dozen young fellows in this town, like Bones."

"Blacken them!" exclaimed Arany, a trace of contempt in his tones. Major Haddon toyed lightly with the snuff-box. Arany watched him, writhing, twitching.

"You are a dangerous character, Arany," went on the district attorney, talking as between man and man, "and

under present conditions, no matter what we've got against you, you won't get out of our clutches for the period of the war. I take it that you understand that fully; am I right?"

"I'm no fool," returned Arany; "and that much I concede. You'll keep me safe. I can see that, whether you've got the proof you say you've got or not."

The district attorney watched the major as he snapped the snuff-box cover open and then snapped it shut.

"We—er—we can make it easy for you—or we can make it hard for you. That's all," went on the district attorney. "It's up to you."

"Do I get that snuff-box if I tell the truth?" queried Arany.

"You sure do!" said the district attorney.

"And I can keep it?"

"You sure can!"

The promise alone seemed to stimulate Arany. His eyes flashed, glowed.

He laughed; his laugh was high-strung, hysterical. "I want to get a message through to Berlin," cried Arany; "through to the Emperor—direct or indirect. I want him to know now what he'll ultimately find out. I want him to know now that Alexis Arany, M. D., of Paragon City, has proved himself a loyal soldier. Tell him from me that Alexis Arany has killed a regiment of men—a regiment of men who otherwise would go to war—a regiment of Americans. Americans—bah! Tell him I have done it by lies, deceit, cajolery—by appeal to fear, by playing on the affections of mothers and of fathers. But I have done it. I have done it by injecting into more than three thousand healthy human organisms a serum composed of plain, ordinary tuberculosis germs—cultures taken from the most malignant cases I could find. I have inoculated your young men with incurable disease; that's all. Get that to the Emperor for me. Now give me the cocaine."

Major Haddon passed over the snuff-box to Arany.

"Take care of that man!" he said sharply. "You've got in your hands one of the most desperate and whole-

sale murderers that ever existed on the face of this earth."

The officers dragged Arany from the room. Suddenly a terrific yell rent the air. The district attorney turned to the major in alarm.

"Be calm," said Major Haddon grimly. "They're not killing him. I dumped the cocaine from that snuff-box—and filled it up with powdered sugar. Hence the row." He smiled.

*His Escape

By Will Payne

Joel Borden was thinking of suicide. He had thought of suicide before, but always with a certain remoteness that implied a considerable interval between the thought and the deed. Never before had the thought come so close. It seemed to be whispering "Now! Right now!"

He was sitting in a narrow, dingy, belittered room, at a desk that ran along one wall—the office of the managing editor of the Great Bend *Times,* for that was his position—and he was staring at a galley proof that contained a column-long obituary of Thomas Prentice Scott, or Tommy Scott, as the descriptive line beneath the portrait said.

About the time of the Edith Cavell incident, Tommy Scott began taking lessons in aviation. When Germany announced the resumption of unlimited submarine warfare he slipped over to France and enlisted in that branch of the service. The cables had mentioned him three or four times since then. The last mention—that afternoon—was very brief, for in the rush of war news there was little space for personalities. About all it said was: "Killed in action." Whereupon Borden had caused this column-long obituary to be written by the member of the staff he thought best able to do the subject justice. He had been fond of Tommy Scott, and so had a good many other people in Great Bend.

As he stared down at the proof, the thought in the center of his mind whispered "Now!" Dying at twenty-four, Thomas Prentice Scott had made his brief life shine like a star. Borden's own life was of nearly twice

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that duration, he being forty-three. It did not shine. To his own mind, at that moment, it stank like an old dish-rag. It was a penetrating sense of that contrast which brought the idea of suicide so close.

Latterly he had begun subtly to wear the indefinable air of a defeated man. He was lean and somewhat stoop-shouldered, with a sallow face too deeply seamed for one of his age. As usual, on coming in from dinner he had taken off his coat, collar and tie, and rolled his shirt-sleeves above his elbows for the night's work. He looked the more disheveled because a two days' growth of sandy beard stubbled his face, and his bushy reddish mustache always needed trimming.

His office as managing editor was one of a series of rooms opening on a hall that flanked the composing room on two sides—all on the top floor of the four-story red-brick old Times Building. It adjoined the office of the boss, which was in the corner where the hall described a right angle.

The name of the boss was Herbert Bent. By direction of the owners—the Harriman-Rosenbaum Syndicate—he was in full control of the paper. When he O. K.'d a proof or otherwise expressed his commands in writing he signed only his initials, with a ring round them. Jim Hartigan, foreman of the composing room, said those initials signified the Human Being. So the men in the establishment took to calling him the Human Being, or just the Being for short—that is, behind his back.

One had to see him in order to get the point of Hartigan's joke. His frame was large and heavily laden with fat, though he was only forty or so. Even in walking on the level he wheezed slightly. A double chin overran his collar, and on any sudden motion his chops undulated like unset jelly. His eyebrows were uncommonly thick and his forehead seemed originally to have ended only an inch and a half above them. Baldness in front had extinguished the original line, but the sloping brow and heavily thatched protuberant eyes made him look oddly like a frog when his hat was off. Young Artie Ferguson, assistant city editor, had said, with the air of an earnest

inquirer: "But do you suppose he really is a human being?"

At five minutes past seven that evening—while Borden was staring at the proof and entertaining the dark thought—Bent left his office to go to dinner, and on his way to the elevator glanced through the open door of the composing room. His glance was habitually minatory—like a standing notice that he didn't propose to tolerate any foolishness from anybody. Two minutes later Hartigan, foreman of the composing room, sidled in through the open door of Borden's room in an ink-smeared apron, with a green shade over his eyes and his red hair sticking up in the usual disorder. The rapid sidling brought him up to the swivel chair in which the managing editor sat.

Borden looked up, rather absently, then, and stifled a sigh. His left hand reached to an open drawer and took out a chocolate caramel, which he slipped into his mouth, though he had come from dinner only a quarter of an hour before; seeing which, the foreman's heart was troubled, and he frowned slightly as he spoke in confidence, somewhat under his breath:

"The Being's having a five-column story set. He asked me what time the Bulldog went to press. I told him one-fifteen, and he said he'd be back to look after the make-up himself."

"What's the story about?" Borden asked, also in confidence; for this was by way of a conspiracy on the part of the crew against the captain. The Bulldog, of course, was the early mail edition of the paper.

"Hot slam at Gardner," the foreman replied; "General Oil letters. He told me not to pull any proofs except for the proof-reader." The managing editor seemed surprised. For a moment he speculated, worrying his bushy mustache. His glance turned to the galley proof he had been contemplating.

"He's killed that," said Hartigan, with a little nod at the proof.

Again an arrested, disturbed look shadowed the managing editor's face. Then he said quietly:

"All right, Jim. Slip me a proof of his story as soon as you can."

He and Hartigan had worked together on the *Times* for twenty years. There was no need of his thanking the foreman for this contraband information that the boss intended putting a slam at Gardner into the paper without bothering to tell the managing editor about it, or for the foreman to warn him not to give the transaction away. All that was understood between them.

About half an hour later Borden—wearing coat, collar, tie and hat—looked into the city editor's room.

"I'm going out a spell, Billy; sit at my desk until I get back," he said cheerfully.

A look of alarm appeared on the city editor's chubby face—a look of dismay and appeal. He seemed on the point of exclaiming: "For God's sake, Jo——" But his eyes dropped to his desk sadly, and he only muttered: "All right!" Then he got up.

Borden knew perfectly what troubled him. He wished to clap him on the chubby shoulder, with affectionate reassurance, and say, "Don't worry, Billy; I'm all right." But even as the city editor felt the uselessness of expostulating, so the managing editor felt the uselessness of assurances. Without further speech he left the building.

For two hours the city editor sat at his chief's desk with a heavy heart, whose forebodings gradually changed to mournful conviction as the minutes passed and Borden did not appear. Then Borden entered briskly, with a firm step, clear, shining eyes and an unflushed face. He did then lay an affectionate hand on the chubby shoulder, and asked, "How's it going?"—his mind running first to the affairs of the newspaper. As he took off his hat, coat, collar and tie, and rolled up his sleeves, the city editor told him briefly how the night's news was shaping.

"Good!" said Borden. "I've got a bit of copy to fix up. Mind the ship a while longer, old man."

Turning to his coat he took a folded manuscript from an inside pocket. Then, reaching to a drawer in the desk, he extracted a bunch of keys. "I'll be in Dewstow's

room if anything turns up," he added as he went out. With profound relief and gratitude, the city editor sat on at the desk for three-quarters of an hour. When Borden came in, then, to take the desk the city editor was struck by something odd about him—a resilience; a sort of intensity that one couldn't exactly put one's finger on, though one could feel it.

It was more than two hours later—namely, at twenty minutes past twelve—when the Human Being got off the elevator at the fourth floor and waddled down the hall to his room, with a slight wheeze and a minatory glance into the composing room as he passed. The door of his room fastened with a spring lock. He got a key out of his vest pocket to let himself in, and he had just pressed the button that turned on the electric lights when he was aware of Borden standing in the doorway.

The Being had not only dined well but supped, being recklessly addicted to the pleasures of the table. His fat chops were a rich pink, and he moved deliberately, like a man enjoying the sense of bodily content, hanging up his shiny walking-stick, and sporty yellow hat with a green band round it, then stepping over to the big chair in front of his desk and settling himself into it. He was perfectly aware of Borden, standing and evidently waiting to speak to him, but he gave no sign of being aware of it until he had taken a silver case from his pocket and carefully selected a cigar. Even then he merely glanced up, frog-like, quite willing to let the managing editor wait. Borden had closed the door behind him. Uninvited, he stepped over and sat down at the end of the desk.

"I've come across a great story, Bent," he began—"greatest story I ever came across in my life." He spoke soberly, but with a nervous edge in his voice.

The statement arrested Bent's professional interest as a newspaper man. He went on deliberately lighting his cigar, but looking at the managing editor like one waiting to hear more.

"I've been in this newspaper game twenty-three years too," Borden continued; "twenty-three years right on this old shebang, here—since good old Colonel Mosely let

me try my hand as a cub reporter; twenty years old at the time." He seemed at the moment in a reminiscent mood as he studied the fat face across the corner of the desk.

But the Being was not interested in reminiscences.

"What's your story?" he inquired unsympathetically.

"Greatest story I ever ran into in my life!" Borden repeated. "The old *Times* never printed a better one. But the deuce of it is, you see, to know how to handle it. It's sort of personal. To give you the right angle on it—to show you how I stand in connection with it—you'll have to go back a bit.

"Old Colonel Mosely made this paper, you know—though he was young Mosely when he got hold of it, way back in the fifties. Coming back from Shiloh, without a left leg, was when he made it a big paper. The Civil War—the slavery business—gave him his opportunity. There are families scattered all round this section of the United States, as far east as the Alleghanies, as far west as the Rockies and down to the Gulf, that have taken the weekly edition for fifty years, and swear by it. Colonel Mosely made the paper."

Bent was looking at him rather blankly, but listening.

"The old colonel died fourteen years ago," Borden went on, "and ever since then the paper's been on and off the market—a bundle of merchandise that anybody with the money might buy. Wesley & Phillips bought it twelve years ago and made me managing editor. I've run the paper ever since, so far's getting the news into it and the pictures and the special articles, and all that, go—just as I'm running it now, you know."

He smiled apologetically.

"You see, that gives me a sort of chesty personal feeling about it. So far as seventy-five per cent of the stuff in it is concerned, why, it's been my paper. I've said what it should print and what it shouldn't. As a newspaper man, you know it's that seventy-five per cent—the regular news and features, and so on—that about nine men out of ten buy a paper for, anyhow. If the circu-

lation has kept up and grown some right along I give myself credit for it. See? I tell myself that when people buy the *Times* they're mostly buying me."

Bent was frowning slightly. This sounded to him like the prelude to a demand for a salary raise.

"But, of course," the managing editor went on, "there's always been somebody else to dictate the editorial policy—to say what candidates for office it should support, and that sort of thing. That never bothered me much. Like most newspaper men, I'm a case-hardened cynic about politics, anyway. My notion is that nine times out of ten whichever candidate is elected will turn out to be a more or less well-meaning and ineffectual blockhead; so it makes mighty little difference to the common man whether it's Jones or Robinson."

"You said a mouthful there," Bent growled, with approval.

"So it didn't bother me much that somebody else was dictating the editorial policy—that is, usually," the managing editor resumed. "The people who owned the paper and were doing the dictating had their little axes to grind, of course; but a man who's as cynical about politics generally as I am couldn't work up much indignation about that—or enthusiasm, either. Mostly I just went ahead, getting out the best newspaper I knew how and not bothering about the editorial policy." He regarded the Being thoughtfully for a moment and twisted an end of his mustache.

"But this new deal is different, you know; it's certainly a new deal to me. I don't know just who or what this Harriman-Rosenbaum Syndicate is. They seem to have got hold of four newspapers in the last two years. They bobbed up in possession of the old *Times* last winter, and you came down here to take full control last March—two weeks before the United States declared war, as it happened."

Bent had lowered the pudgy hand that held the cigar to the desk. His fat face settled in a menacing way, the jaws firmly shut.

Borden smiled at him and admonished good-naturedly:

"Don't get excited now. It's all part of the story. Whoever they are, I give 'em credit for being pretty smooth. Yes, sir; I'll sign a testimonial to that any day. The old *Times* has been perfectly loyal. The whole Post-Office Department and Secret Service, with a magnifying glass, couldn't find a line to prosecute it on or bar it from the mails. As an old newspaper man I've had to admire their game. You know, Bent. No disloyalty at all; but just a bucket of cold water here and a sneer there, and always a pious suggestion, which the ordinary reader could never exactly put his finger on—the pious suggestion that, 'Well, it's too bad! We're terribly sorry about it, but we're sure to get licked.' You know, Bent."

"You're drunk!" said Bent.

But Borden smiled and replied:

"Probably I should have been if it hadn't been for you. It's been a smooth game, Bent. German successes played up; Ally failures played up; everything discouraging played up! Here it is in a nutshell." From his trousers pocket he pulled a crumpled piece of print paper—a galley proof; a companion to the one containing the obituary notice of Tommy Scott at which he had stared early in the evening. But he had taken this proof from a hook in the composing room. On the margin of it was written, in blue pencil: "Kill. H. B."

"When the news of Tommy Scott's death came in," he went on, "I gave it to Artie Ferguson and told him to write a column—because he can write and because he was a friend of Tommy Scott. He did a good job. What he wrote would have stirred men's hearts and women's hearts. It would have reconciled them to the idea of sacrificing even as fine a lad as Tommy Scott in a great cause. But you killed it!"

"Too much space; we haven't got room for it," Bent grumbled. Again Borden smiled at him.

"Oh, no, Bent. That's not the reason. We could have found room for it. Just as news it's worth the space. I know more about that than you do. You killed it because you don't want men's hearts stirred. You don't want them reconciled to the idea of sacrifice.

You don't want them in a heroic mood. That's the reason you killed it and had a stickful written to take its place—a stickful of cold dish-water, very pious, very proper, but with no more punch in it than an old orange peel. Post-Office Department couldn't complain of it. Nobody could point to it as an evidence of disloyalty. But it's poison just the same. That's your game, Bent."

Bent took a puff at his cigar and seemed minded to yawn; but abruptly he cocked an ear, listening. Almost from the moment he entered the room Borden had been aware of a smothered rumbling down below. With an alarmed motion Bent pulled out his watch; but it showed only thirty-seven minutes past twelve.

"What's on the presses now?" he asked.

"They're running off the back pages of the weekly," Borden replied. "Don't be impatient. I'm coming to the story; but, as I told you, I've got to clear the ground a bit. The old *Times* always fought Sam Stowell. Colonel Mosely fought him when he was a congressman; fought his election as governor. After the colonel died, Wesley & Phillips fought his election to the Senate. Then Hartwell bought the paper. He cared for nothing but the business end; he never fought anybody—a broad smile and a glad hand for all comers was his idea. So he didn't really fight Stowell, but just politely deprecated him a bit.

"You know Slippery Sam as well as I do. Some people say he has low principles; but they're mistaken. He never had any. He'd preach you a Sermon on the Mount that would make you weep; and the next day, just as cheerfully, he'd burn an orphan asylum if he thought he could carry a doubtful district that way. He's of the fine old school of machine politics. Nothing else matters a whoop so long as you get the votes and the swag. I always sort of liked him, in fact. He amused me. The way people fell for his tinsel bunk amused me too. But along in 1914 and 1915 he couldn't see anything but a big German vote in this state. You know how he played up to it.

" Probably he's getting old and his mind is stiffer in the joints than it used to be. Anyway, he kept right on playing that hand after a brighter man—even if he was as big a crook—would have seen it was played out. He did what he could to get the United States balled up with England. He tried to keep us out of the war, and ever since we went in he's been busy pouring sand into the bearings. That don't amuse me, Bent—not when I think of Tommy Scott and the million boys who are going into these training cantonments. I can't see any joke in it."

Bent was frowning again.

" What's the matter with you, anyhow? " he growled. " You don't imagine I care a damn whether you see a joke in it or not, do you? "

" Certainly not," Borden replied cheerfully. " But I've got to tell you this so you'll get the story that I'm coming to. Next Tuesday, you know, is the primary election for nominations for United States senator. We're supporting Edgar Peasely. Of course, anybody with sense enough to come in out of the rain—anybody, that is, except maybe forty or fifty thousand idiots with votes—knows Peasely's got no more show than the man in the moon. The only fight is between Sam Stowell and Mark Gardner. It would be exactly Slippery Sam's politics—and yours, too, for that matter—to put up a stalking horse like that conceited ass, Peasely, in order to divide the opposition to Stowell. That trick's older than the hills. I suppose Ptolemy used it. We're supporting Peasely—which means we're fighting Gardner and trying to elect Stowell.

" Gardner is an easy man to fight in some ways. He's supposed to have considerable money—which is more or less of a crime for political purposes. His personal associations have been pretty much with successful men of affairs, and successful men of affairs are usually rich men. He was a successful lawyer—which means that he had big business concerns for his clients—corporation lawyers we call 'em when we want to slam 'em; though as three-quarters of the business of the country is done by corporations a successful lawyer is pretty sure to have

corporations for his clients. He never had anything in particular to do with politics; so all the people, from the village postmaster up, who have had particularly to do with politics regard him as a sort of interloper—an easy man to fight in some ways.

"But back in 1914 he got stirred up about this war business; thought the United States was going to get into it without any preparation. He ran for Congress and was elected. You'll admit he's made a remarkable record for a new congressman—especially since things began to get red hot last winter; and more especially still since the United States declared war. It's my candid opinion that any man who can see straight and wants the United States to win this war wants Mark Gardner at Washington. If there are any scores to settle with him on that old corporation-lawyer count and his association with rich men, we can settle 'em at some more convenient time. He went into the race against Stowell because he couldn't stand the old man's rotten war record. You know as well as I do that there's nothing in this election except a choice between true blue and greasy yellow. You know it perfectly. That's why you're supporting Peasely."

"If you don't like the paper you're working for you can resign," said Bent.

"But you won't want me to when I've told you the story," Borden replied, with a smile. "You won't even want to fire me, as you did Ted Parks. I give you credit for one thing, Bent: you didn't interfere with the staff much. You knew what newspaper staffs are—mostly just taking orders from the boss, and humping their shoulders and getting out the paper. But you fired Ted Parks. His editorials on this war annoyed you. They were too sharp and convincing. You couldn't bear to have him round the place. You made a mistake there too. You see, Ted's been ambitious to write for the magazines; but so long as he was doing his daily newspaper stunt he didn't have much time. He's a bit lazy, I'm afraid—terribly interested in a whole lot of things besides work, like most of the bright youngsters. So I

don't know whether he'd ever have got round to try his hand in a bigger field if you hadn't fired him.

"That gave him leisure; and, as he has a little money, he decided to experiment. He looked about quite a while before he found what struck him as a good subject for a magazine article. When he found the subject and got his data and wrote the article, he couldn't make up his mind to send it off. . . . But I'll tell you more about that in a minute. I must tell you, first, how I came to look Ted up this evening:

"After you went out to dinner I was looking around the composing room and I found they were setting some stuff that I didn't know anything about. I asked Jim what it was and he said it was a story you'd given out. I looked on the hook for proofs; but Jim said you'd told him not to pull any proofs except for the proof-reader. Of course I'm in charge here when you're not about and I feel sort of responsible. As soon as the story was set I pulled a proof and read it over. It was natural that I should want to know what was going into the paper I'm managing editor of." Bent was regarding him intently, with a sort of fat, menacing alertness.

"The story, you remember, contains facsimiles of three brief letters from Mark Gardner to Wilbur P. Rockwell, treasurer of that branch of the General Oil Company which operates in this region. Wilbur P. Rockwell's name is sort of familiar to newspaper readers with good memories. It figured conspicuously in the Congressman Putnam scandal five years ago, when it was discovered that Mr. Rockwell was contributing liberally to Mr. Putnam's campaign fund, which cooked Mr. Putnam's goose.

"These three short letters from Gardner to Rockwell are typewritten on the letter-heads of a Washington hotel. They are dated this present year, and they show that Rockwell was sending quite a bunch of money to Gardner—or, rather, to somebody else by Gardner's direction. Taking all the cry about Gardner's being a corporation attorney, hand in glove with the plutocracy, and people's inveterate suspicions of anybody in that position—and

taking the very clever work that's been done to confuse the issue in this election—it looks very probable to me that these letters, coming out in the respectable old Great Bend *Times* on Saturday morning, when the election is to be next Tuesday, would defeat Gardner and elect Slippery Sam. With my experience of politics, and knowing how mighty easy it is to fool people for a while, and all the prejudice against General Oil, and so on, it looks to me as though these letters would very likely turn the trick. Of course, that's what you count on.

"I happen to know, and probably so do you, that Gardner has taken a house in Washington. Also, as a congressman, he has an office and a secretary. Seemed sort of odd to me that he'd be going to a hotel to write letters of such a ticklish nature—dictating 'em to the public typist there, for all that appears. The facsimile signatures looked genuine enough, and I didn't doubt that Gardner had written some such letters. You noticed, of course, that they were addressed, 'Dear Rockwell'—indicating more or less intimacy and frequency of intercourse, which would be a bad thing in itself for a candidate for the Senate. The letters sounded hasty, as though a busy man had dictated them on the run, so to speak.

"Then I got to thinking about that Putnam scandal five years ago. You may not remember all the details; but it came out that Putnam's letters to Rockwell were stolen from Rockwell's letter file and sold to a newspaper. I remembered Rockwell's saying that other letters were stolen at the same time. Naturally, I wondered whether these letters from Mark Gardner hadn't been stolen from Rockwell's file at the same time." He was looking very steadily at Bent, who was glowing back at him.

"Of course you'll see in an instant what a tremendous difference that would make," the managing editor continued. "Five years ago, or at any time back of five years ago, Mark Gardner was merely a private citizen—a successful lawyer with a large practice; corporation lawyer, if you like. Very likely he handled some law

business for the General Oil Company. Like every other big concern, the General Oil Company has plenty of legitimate law business. Suppose, say, he was at Washington, arguing a case before the Supreme Court; communicating with Rockwell about it, giving directions as to how money was to be paid to cover certain expenses of the suit, or something like that. Naturally, he would be staying at a hotel and, naturally, he would dictate the letters there. The fact that they were written in a hotel would suggest there was nothing particular to conceal.

"Mind you, I'm not saying just that did happen. I've had no time to look it up. But I'm guessing that the letters will finally be explained in some such way. You know how easy it would be to change the date on a letter—perhaps by merely altering one figure. It would be easy, too, to touch up the context. Changing only three or four words would give it quite a different slant. That first and most important letter reads sort of chopped off—as though some explanatory paragraphs had been cut out of it.

"All that occurred to me, Bent, when I read the story. It would occur to other people who'd had my experience. But a facsimile letter looks terribly convincing to the man in the street, you know. There's the photograph of it, signature and all. It looks mighty convincing to him. And, you see, there's no time now to sift the thing out. Gardner and Rockwell would enter denials, no doubt; but there's no time to get a convincing, circumstantial denial before the public. Tens of thousands of voters might very likely swallow the thing whole. And a couple of tens of thousands are probably all Slippery Sam needs.

"While I was in the composing room I ran across this proof here—showing that you'd killed my obituary of Tommy Scott. I took that, and the proof of your slam at Gardner, and went out to Ted Parks' house to have a talk with him. You made a mistake in firing him. That gave him a lot of leisure to sort of keep an eye on things.

"Ted told me that Otto Lachner was at the Elliott Hotel this afternoon—not registered, but there all the same. He left on the six-thirty for St. Louis. You see,

Ted has been looking things over and thinking about 'em quite a lot. He has evolved an interesting theory about Otto Lachner. Ted told me, too, that you'd spent some time in Lachner's room at the hotel this afternoon. Maybe he'd bribed a hall boy or a clerk. Anyhow, he's keeping quite an eye on things."

Bent was glaring then; but Borden went on evenly, with only that edge of a high nervous tension in his voice.

"Naturally, that gave me an idea. As soon as I got back to the office I came into your room here. Maybe you don't know it, but I've had a key to this room for a dozen years. I came in here and looked in the waste-basket, and found what I wanted. I found a cut string and a sheet of heavy wrapping paper, creased the way wrapping paper gets when it's been used to do up a bundle. The creases showed the size of the bundle—just the size of those electroplate facsimiles of the letters out there in the composing room.

"Of course I had discovered before that, by looking at the copy in the composing room, that the story wasn't written here in the office. You brought it in all written up, ready for the printers, and with the electroplate facsimiles of the letters all ready to go into the forms. Naturally, I concluded that Otto Lachner had handed you the story and the plates at the Elliott Hotel this afternoon."

"You rotten sneak!" Bent began vehemently.

But Borden grinned, held up a protesting hand, and warned, in a voice above Bent's:

"Just a minute! Hear the evidence! The wrapping paper and string weren't all I found in the waste-basket. I found two torn letter-heads of the Elliott Hotel, on the backs of which you and Otto Lachner had constructed the head-lines to go over the story. At any rate, the hand-writing is mostly yours. The other hand, no doubt, is his. You two sat down at a table and worked out the head-lines—trying 'em several different ways until you got 'em to suit you. You wrote on the back of Elliott Hotel letter-heads, and you brought the sheets over here

to make a fair copy from. Careless of you to toss 'em into the waste-basket! I have 'em now."

"And where do you think you'll get with all this stuff?" Bent burst forth, glaring. "I'll fire you! You're a booze fighter; a souse! You can't keep sober six months running to save your life. Every newspaper in the country knows your reputation. You couldn't get another responsible job to save your life. Tanks aren't wanted any more. You've been stuffing yourself with candy and fruit the last two days trying to stave off a spree. Everybody on the staff, down to the youngest cub reporter, knows the signs. They've all been nervous as cats to-day, expecting the usual thing—you in the ditch for three days, then in the hospital for a week, and the paper going at sixes and sevens. Why, no other newspaper would let you run the freight elevator! I have kept you on here just from good nature. I'll fire you, and you may get a job peddling shoe-strings."

For a long moment after Bent's angry voice ceased the room was quite still, Borden staring at the fat man—or, rather, staring beyond him. He put a lean hand up to his bushy mustache and said, in a lower key, absently:

"All of which is perfectly true, Bent—perfectly true. I've been a hog for fifteen years. . . . As a matter of fact, I was thinking of suicide when you went out to dinner this evening. I've thought of it before; but this time it came close. Partly that was because of Tommy Scott. I was fond of Tommy; everybody was who knew him—a fine, bright lad. Young Tommy was dead over there in France, you see, for a cause he believed in and was willing to die for; and old Joel Borden was a hog here in Great Bend, trying to stave off another spree that would put him in the gutter once more, and degrade his wife and children once more—and feeling right down in his gizzard that he wasn't going to stave it off. Seemed to me there was only one answer I could make to the thousand hot little devils in my brain that were yelling for whisky; and that was to take the old forty-four out of the second drawer of my desk and blow them out. . . .

"Then I went into the composing room and discovered

your story about Mark Gardner. You see, this old *Times* is my paper a lot more than it's yours or the chaps' that have paid some money for the stock. I grew up with it. I've thought for it and worked for it about all my life. Your Gardner story was a sort of last straw. You meant to put this good, honest old *Times,* that used to fight for the flag, down into the gutter too. You were going to make a skulking traitor out of it."

Bent pulled out his watch, saying: "I'm going to the composing room."

Heaving his bulk out of a chair, however, was a matter of some difficulty, and before he had got the proper leverage Borden interposed sharply:

"Hold on, now! You've got a couple of minutes more; plenty of time then to make up that front page of the Bulldog. I'm about through."

Bent settled back, scowling; and the managing editor continued more rapidly:

"I'm right at the nub of the story. Instead of blowing out my brains I went to Ted Parks. I told you Ted had written an article he hoped to sell to a magazine. His article was about this paper—how this mysterious syndicate got control of it; how you came in. He described very cleverly, with illustrative details, how, without any overt disloyalty, you changed the whole tone and effect of the paper—made a prize slacker and crape hanger and discourager of patriotism out of it.

"There was nothing the Secret Service or a court could really act on. But when the evidence was cleverly put together, as Ted put it together—like your killing my Tommy Scott obituary and putting a cold-dish-water little stickful in place of it—it made a mighty convincing story. A court wouldn't hang you on it; but you can bet public opinion would. He showed how Otto Lachner had been fluttering round here in the background. It was a good piece of work.

"You see, I was certain Ted had written that story, because he had talked to me about it. He told me he wasn't satisfied with it, and so hadn't really finished it and sent it to a magazine. But in my gizzard I knew better; I

knew the reason he didn't send the story off was because he couldn't write it truthfully without showing me up for what I was—a stinking coward. That's just what I was, Bent—a stinking coward! When Ted talked to me about the story it gave me cold feet. I was afraid that, if he did write it and get it published, I'd be fired; and I knew well enough what trouble I'd have in getting a responsible position on any other newspaper, with my reputation. Booze fighters aren't wanted any more. In my young days it was different; but nowadays a man looking for a first-class newspaper job might about as well have small-pox as have the reputation of going off every few months on a week's spree without notice.

"You don't know what an awful coward I was, Bent. So long as I could hold this job I could at least provide a good living for my family. To imagine myself looking them in the face and telling them I'd been fired, and we'd probably have to move into a three-room flat on a back street, where I might get a desk job at thirty dollars a week, was more than I could stand. I hung to this like a shipwrecked man hanging to a plank. I didn't dare to tell Ted to go ahead and print his story and show up the treason here, and let me take my chances. I was some coward, Bent!

"That was exactly the trouble with me—do you see? When any man lets a vice master him you don't need to dope him with bromides. I took a cure twice. And you don't need to dope him about heredity and environment and economic conditions. There's something wrong in that man's own soul. Tell him to cure that. I've been a drunkard because I've been a coward. I've lived craven. I've been afraid of the booze; afraid of my job; afraid of myself. I haven't had the guts to stand up to my enemy, eye to eye, and smash him in the face. That's been the trouble with me. I know it now—absolutely.

"So I went to Ted to-night to tell him to go ahead with his story, cutting out some less effective stuff and adding this last little touch of the Tommy Scott obituary; but more especially adding this last straw of your slam at

Mark Gardner—explaining, you see, that Otto Lachner was here; that you and he were at the hotel together; that he gave you the manuscript of the story and the electro-plates of the letters; that you and he built the head-lines on Elliott Hotel stationery. It's mighty convincing, Bent. I'm a good judge, and I tell you it will make a corking story."

Bent grasped the arms of his chair to heave his bulk out of it, his face in the deepest scowl its excessive fatness would permit. As he got to his feet he said:

"You're a sneak and a traitor to your paper!"

By all the traditions of the craft, treason to one's paper is a black charge to bring against a newspaper man. Borden rose too—between the fat man and the door—quite tense, his lean, stubbly-bearded face thrust forward.

"And what have you been a traitor to, Bent?" he asked. "What about you? What have you been betraying?"

"Rats!" said Bent, in deep disgust for what the questions implied. "I look out for myself. Get out of the way!"

But Borden still stood in his path, not looking like a man to be lightly pushed aside.

"It's you that have been a traitor to the paper!" he said. "Do you suppose forty thousand Americans would have been buying it every day—and fifty thousand the weekly edition—if they'd seen what you were trying to do with them? They're the paper. You've been putting ground glass in their bread. Why did your backers pick out the Great Bend *Times?* Why did they want this Gardner story to come out in it? Because of its solid old standing. Because people have confidence in it. Because a lot of honest men have worked to make a reputation for it. You're cutting their throats."

"To hell with you!" Bent retorted angrily. "Get out of the way! You're fired right now! You'll be drunk to-morrow and begging for a job next week. You're done! And don't forget this, you dirty sneak: Mark Gardner will be as dead as a door-nail to-morrow too. Let Parks go ahead with his magazine story if he wants. It will come out a month after the funeral. I'll know

what to say to it by that time. You're a fool, Borden! I think you've gone nutty."

He put a ponderous hand to the managing editor's shoulder and pushed him aside. But Borden caught his arm, exclaiming:

"Let's see, now." With the other hand he drew an ancient open-face silver watch from his dangling vest. "It's two minutes of one. I'd rather you waited two minutes more; but if you're bound to go now ——"

Without finishing the sentence he stepped quickly to the door, threw it open and called, "Oh, Jimmy!"—standing on the threshold and holding the door so as to block Bent's exit. "I've got something to show you," he said over his shoulder to the fat man, close behind him; and almost in the same breath, addressing the snub-nosed office boy who had answered his call, he directed: "Fetch the Bulldog."

As the boy ran back to Borden's room the managing editor explained to Bent, whose paunch pressed against him and whose scowling face was just above his shoulder:

"I'm the boss here when you're not about. When you're out of the building what I say goes. You ought to have remembered that."

Jimmy came up, with a freshly printed paper, which Borden took from his hands. Unfolding it, he explained further:

"I put the Bulldog to press an hour ahead of time tonight—at a quarter past twelve. We'll miss some news; but this will make up for it."

With a finger that trembled slightly he pointed to the top of the front page. Across three columns at the right-hand side—above the position Bent had intended for the beginning of his slam at Mark Gardner—appeared, in big black letters: A Traitorous Plot Exposed! And beneath that, in somewhat smaller type: A Statement to the Readers of the *Times* by Joel Borden, Managing Editor.

"That's Ted Parks' story of what you've done to this paper," said Bordon, "edited and extended by me with the Gardner-letters stuff. It's a corking story, Bent!"

he added exultantly. "It kills you dead! It kills your gang! It kills Slippery Sam! It puts the old *Times* right—back under the flag where she belongs. It's been on the presses three-quarters of an hour. It's in the mails. It's going on the four winds. The Associated Press has been sending it out for half an hour. The devil and all his works can't stop it now!"

His fingers still trembled; but his face shone. He peered closer at the page. The title of the paper was printed across its top in ornamental type; beneath the title was the device of an eagle, with wings outstretched for flight, beside an American flag—just as in Colonel Mosely's time. Modern journalism, with its preference for plain letters, considered that amusingly old-fashioned; but Borden peered at it with a sort of hungry affection. He turned somewhat, in order to face Bent more squarely, and smiled slightly; men of his sort usually do when expressing emotion, as though that was something to be apologized for.

"There's the story the old paper carries to-night, Bent," he said. "And be damned to the enemies of the United States!"

Bent seemed to be grinding his teeth, and he spoke thickly:

"Drunk! Go and get drunk!"

But Borden's smile broadened triumphantly as he replied:

"You don't get the whole point of my story yet: It's a personal story; my story—the cure for cowardice! I've won! I'm going home right now to wake up my wife and show her this paper, and tell her I'll never take a drink again as long as I live. I know that—absolutely! There's no more fear of it in me. I've gone over the top, you fat slob!"

*The Boy's Mother

By Laura S. Porter

For many days, off and on at frequent intervals, Merington might have been seen striding up the path of a certain garden. Then there was that one day when she met him in the library; the day when her lame brother limped out of the room on his crutches and left her and Merington and a perfectly dead silence.

Merington never knew exactly how he got to the subject; very few men who make a success of it ever do. Why should a man remember just what got him to the point where he is as melted wax before the woman he loves? Merington probably could not have told you any more than that at last he took her in his arms with his own clumsy fierceness, and said a few broken sentences.

It might be recorded that Merington floated home that night. When he got home he sat and floated some more for a long time; and finally, toward two o'clock, he went to bed.

During the next week there was news for him. Merington was probably twice as surprised as the world at large, barring the German Empire, when the world broke into war. Nobody was more confident that there could not be war.

"Good Lord! my dear, we've got past fighting! Why, the murder machines themselves are the best protection. Besides, it would involve everybody! There can't *everybody* go to war! And with the war-machines we've got nowadays —— Oh, well, it won't happen! Don't disturb yourself, my dear. Don't you look anxious!"

And, having settled the question to her comfort, he

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stirred his tea and took another of the jam sandwiches she offered him and put a kiss on her white forearm before she set the plate again on the tray.

Two weeks later he had answered his country's call. He showed some swagger at his club that day and expressed profound relief. England was coming to her senses, thank heaven! She had been asleep too long. Look how she had shilly-shallied over the Irish affairs, and bungled and muddled everything else. She had been too patient; and such a lot of talk! But now, by George! there really would be something done! For himself, he asked nothing better than to be permitted to do his share. "For it's not going to amount to more than a jolly good beating for them. We'll be back to tea and jam sandwiches almost before we're there. Look at the Powers they've got against them!"

All this to young Brookby, who was, Merington knew, hard hit by the news. For if young Brookby went—and of course he'd have to go!—there was young Mrs. Brookby to leave, and that new first baby—with five names and just three weeks of life to its count.

"Gad! I hope they won't dawdle about it! A lot of red tape, you know, and all that sort of thing. I'd like jolly well to start right off!" Merington declared.

By all of which any one not knowing the workings of Merington's mind would have judged he had for years past lived with a soldier's hope—the hope of active service.

The fact was Merington never hesitated to tell an untruth when it could do no harm and could ease the minds of others. It would certainly make things easier for everybody, which was to say for Gwendolen and his mother, if they believed he was really eager to go. Merington's entire moral code was built in a very personal way on others. He had no religious objection whatever to breaking any of the ten commandments. But if the breaking of any one of them brought sorrow or even discomfort to any one else, then the breaking of it was wrong; that was for him the decalogue in a nutshell.

So Merington talked a good deal, by and by, about the

wisdom displayed in the ordering out of his regiment. "They've been deucedly slow about it," he observed. "Two whole months! They ought to have sent us out at once."

But for all these harmless lies which he indulged in at the club, at dinner, at tea, here and there and everywhere, Merington never lied to himself. He knew he hated to go, *hated* to go. He knew he would infinitely rather crack rocks for the rest of his life—if they would only let him crack them on a certain road, where he could get up now and then and run up a certain lovely lane, past the hawthorn hedge to a certain garden, typically English, where she sat, and where the larkspur and prince's feather and mignonette of her tending, roses of an incredible loveliness bloomed, but slight and negligible thing, frail and on their way to wither, compared with that ever fresh and ever renewed loveliness of her.

"Oh, hang it!" Merington said, sitting down heavily in his armchair one night, with an absent, glazy stare. "I can't go!" Then, more softly, "I can't go!" Then, in a kind of whimpering whisper, "I can't, can't, can't leave you, my dear!"

There was a gentle knock at the door. Merington raised his head sharply:

"Yes?"

His mother came into the room. As an excuse, she had a toddy in one hand. She wore a long dressing-gown of a nondescript color. She was a slender woman, and a little gaunt, with a quiet, subdued air about her. The slight stoop of her shoulders, the softness of her step, the little rather dreary gentlenesses and the hesitations in her manner, the little inopportune kindnesses that she was forever rendering absently, and the waiting inflections of her voice—all these bespoke a nature unassertive, a character indefinite and receptive rather than positive or self-made. It was as though upon what had once been a fair blank sheet Life had jotted down, through the years and in fine script, many memoranda, but of matters rather commonplace and of no very great consequence to remember.

The face, which was white and beginning to be old, was to-night, unaffectedly tired. Anxiety had drawn its hands over it. She had hardly slept the night before. She had spent the hours between wakefulness in the moonlight and sundry trips down the hall to his door, where she would stand with her head bent to the door crack, listening. And because each time, tiptoe as she might, Merington's acute hearing was aware of her, she heard him snoring soundly as she stood. This he supposed would comfort her, and it did. Moreover, he could not have borne to have her come and sit by his bed as he believed might be her intention; for in the low wicker chair there beside it in the moonlight his fevered fancy seemed to see the girlish figure, slight, slight and delicate, as a stave of song, unbelievably beautiful, yet real as every throb of his heavy pulses; there near to him she seemed to be, and by an exquisite torment that he allowed himself, just so far from him that he could not draw her to him, body and soul both; there like some sacred chalice in the moonlight, waiting the touch of his lips, but not to be touched—not yet—until he had known the baptism of fire.

So, his own face was gaunt a little, and worn, and the likeness between it and his mother's, which was usually a very slight and shadowy thing, was strong now. You looked from one to the other and you seemed to see time pass, and seemed to know what it had been about.

"Reginald ——"

He looked up, but did not stir from his armchair. She put the toddy on the table and turned the lamp a bit higher. She was just a little too dull, too preoccupied, too timid, to know he had turned it low purposely.

"The evening is so cool. I only wanted to come to see if you had enough fire," she said, absently. She looked so wholly irrelevant standing there behind him, so unwanted. She was like a solitary tree on a sandy dune. She took no notice of the fire whatever, but turned her head very little, and glanced from one point to another of the shadowy room as you have seen a sea pine-tree turn its head ever so slightly to some mysterious

moving air-currents unfelt by any one but itself. It was as though, standing there above him, she felt some presence of calamity, some ominous moving of the great currents of the world that had not yet touched him as he sat there gazing into the fire, but which she knew soon must do so, bowing and quenching his young strength.

"Enough fire?" he said, and raised his head. "Oh, I've plenty, thank you."

It was foolish of them to put each other off. He knew perfectly well, as well as she did, what she had come for.

She came and stood beside him, and remained there mute, gazing into the fire.

He took one of her hands in his and patted it. It was a thin, worn hand, loaded above its wedding band with a lot of ill-assorted rings.

"Too bad, little Mater," he said. (He liked to call her "little Mater.") "Too bad. But never you mind. We'll come back covered with glory, provided we're not covered with earth first."

She took a quick look of horror at him, which he did not see. Then she forgot herself again and tried to enter into his thoughts.

"It will be very hard indeed for you, Reginald."

"For me? Oh, no. I'm itching for it." He dropped her hand and rubbed his own hands together. "*Itching* for it!" He put a hand on each knee and stared into the fire as though there he could picture and see coveted struggle.

"But I mean just now." Her glance went to a picture of Gwendolen on his table.

The coals crumbled together. He withdrew his gaze from them. He reached for his tobacco-pouch. There were hunger and need in his soul that some one should speak to him of her, yet he pretended not to know just what his mother meant. He began filling his pipe with great nicety.

His mother walked away from him with her peculiar, quiet, subdued step, the train of the dressing-gown trailing along after her softly, dutifully. She paused for a moment at the end of the room by a table, then walked

back again and stood near him. With an exceedingly careful forefinger he was pressing the tobacco down in his pipe, very neatly indeed. She watched him, a little dazed, hardly attentive, while he lighted it at last and got it going.

"Don't bother about me, Mater," he said when he had let out a long trial puff. "I'll sleep like a top and pack up in the morning. You're a brick!" He said this pressing and relinquishing the pipe-stem with his lips and his eyes once more on the fire.

His mother noted the delicacy and strength of his hands on the chair-arms. She stood close by him, and took the uncommon liberty of putting her hand on his heavy, blond hair.

"My son! My son! If I were Gwendolen ——"

He responded quickly. He was not afraid now. He looked up with a light in his eyes. "I wonder if you'd be goose enough, eh, Mater, to love a fellow as she does? Do you know she thinks I'm wonderful." He half closed his eyes dreamily. "Do you know, when I think that when I come home she'll marry me ——! That's why I'll come home. Don't you see? I was only speaking in fun before. I feel as though a bullet couldn't hit me with that around me!" Suddenly his face was sober, beautifully sober, as though an unsuspected curtain somewhere were withdrawn, allowing light from a hidden altar to shine on it.

"I suppose not," his mother said, in a bewildered way. Then she slipped into a strange, dreary monotone. "How proud she'll be! Almost as proud as I!"

"You!" Merington was recalled to himself and laughed. "Oh, Mummy! You are foolish about me, but you don't begin to be as foolish about me as she is. Why, she thinks I'm perfect! And you couldn't, couldn't make her see anything else."

His mother was bewildered again. "Yes, I see," she said, not seeing at all, and trying to smile.

They were both silent for a moment, then she spoke:

"I don't think men ever know exactly what it means to a mother. Your father was a very fine man; but I

don't believe even your father could guess. Those long days and nights, I mean." She was looking into the fire intently now, one hand closed on her cheek, dragging her lips down a little bit. "I used to pray so, before I saw you. And I was so afraid you'd be a girl! Of course, if you had been," she said, with quick apology, "I would have loved you. But oh, I wanted a boy. I wanted a boy!" She paused. "And now you are so big and strong! You had a way of reaching up and putting your hand right over my mouth as I held you. You loved to do that. Isn't it ridiculous? And now you are so tall! And I used to hold all of you in my arms, and I'd put your hand spread out on my palm, and it was so soft and so little!"

His thoughts were not with her. His lips no longer tightened and relaxed on his pipe-stem. Indeed, he had taken his pipe from his mouth; the bowl of it was held forgotten in one hand. He was looking into the fire. When he spoke his eyes were narrowed as though better to visualize something:

"Have you noticed her hands, Mummy? Such hands! They are the most wonderful little hands—wonderful little hands!" He remembered, with a sudden swimming of his senses, the soft touch of them in his own.

His mother did not speak at once. When she did, her words, too, were wide of the mark:

"I must not forget to warn Gwendolen that you cannot take iron. You never could. It always made your head ache. And I wonder if she knows how to bandage. You remember how I bandaged your arm that time you hurt it so badly? Doctor Harkness said I did it well. Every one ought to know how to bandage."

"By Jove!"—his eyes were still narrowed speculatively—"if I didn't come back! There is almost something awful in getting a girl's love like that. Hardly seems right. Why, I'd die a thousand times over to save her pain. And here this damnable war—of nobody's making—— Sometimes, do you know, I'm not altogether sure it wouldn't be the finer thing to stay at home——"

His mother's eyes were on him strangely now. "My son, you couldn't honorably," she said, softly, as though to herself. "I couldn't let you. It's a mother's duty to give even that—even her son."

"That may be," he said, with a little laugh, "but it is different with her. I tell you, Mater, you can't realize how she loves me!"

His mother started slightly and took an anxious look at him. He seemed to her strangely changed. They had never spoken in this way nor of such things together.

"Why, yes, I could; I could let you stay at home." She glanced anxiously toward the shadows, almost as though some one might have overheard her. "Or you and I could go away somewhere together. We could simply say ——"

"I was in jest," he said, abruptly.

She walked away from him. "But aren't we foolish to talk so gloomily! Here, my dear, take your toddy."

He allowed her to put the glass in his hand. He held it on his knee, still looking glazedly into the fire. His mother walked away from him again into the shadows of the big room and up and down slowly, quite apart from him. Once she raised her eyes in a kind of mute horror in the shadows, and put her gaunt hands over her face.

"We mustn't be gloomy," she murmured, "but oh, it would be horrible, horrible!" She began her walk again. As she came near to him he heard her words the plainer that they were so soft: "You see, she is young and fresh—she has her whole life ahead of her. I don't mean it would be easy—but in time ——"

"It would kill her," he said, distinctly.

She paused and then resumed her steps. "Oh, no, it wouldn't; no, it wouldn't, my son." Her voice was gentle, monotonous. "She would take it fearfully to heart one year, two years. But she is young. Men do not understand. There is one kind of love that you may get over—there is another that you never, never, never can. She would travel and study and meet new people, and have other men to love her."

His voice struck out sharply:

"Mummy!"

She was near him. She came to his side. Her voice, though it had in it something far off, was full of anxious apology.

"Now, my dear, it's too absurd to suppose I meant any one could ever be to her what you are! But you know perfectly well what I mean. Study and travel and new people, and —— You see, she is young. Compare her with me, for instance. I'm old; at least I'm getting old. I would never care to travel. I am too old to undertake such things. And study —— So many studies open nowadays to young people—law, and medicine, and suffrage, and day nurseries—a thousand interests."

"Mummy!" He turned in his chair but she was at the other end of the room. Certainly she was talking a little daft. He returned to the fire. Gwendolen study medicine! Good Lord! The pink-and-white perfection of her!

His mother came again to his side. Her voice was easy, conciliatory, explanatory. "I mean just this: there are so many general interests for young people. That's what I mean. Lectures, you know, a hundred more things. Now I had a very good education in my day, but think what a foolish spectacle it would be for me to study now—at my age. I'm too old to have any interest in study at all. Then, you see, she's got her music. Now, of course, I can play only those few little things, 'Flow Gently, Sweet Afton,' and the 'Cachucha,' and 'The Fisher's Hornpipe'—the things your father used to like. And even if I could, my hands are getting stiff, really quite stiff." She rubbed one hand absently over the other.

He was thinking suddenly of the "Chopin thing," and the "Grieg," and the adorable droop of Gwendolen's face above the keyboard, and the way her hand, white as a tube-rose, small and sweet, reached down reverently for the last note, and stayed there a moment before it dropped at last by her side.

"Don't you see?" his mother was saying, and was

walking away from him again. "Surely you see. She's got her music."

Merington turned and looked at the retreating figure. He was keenly sensible, for the first time, how stooped the shoulders were, how old she looked. He felt the unreasoning revulsion with which the mind defends itself against a too keen feeling of pity. How utterly without grace old people can be!

"She's got her music," his mother was saying again. "And there are other people coming into her life every day. Whereas when a woman marries and has children —— Of course, some people trust their children to nurses. I never could. I never went anywhere. I've never really gone anywhere to speak of since you were a baby. But she is so young. She would go among people all the while. And some day, just as I did, she would marry some fine man and have a child, and ——"

Merington rose, stung, bewildered, shocked, angry. He could hardly believe he heard aright. His hand on the back of the chair trembled, and his voice trembled a little, too.

"Mummy! You're making a great success of this! For a man to love a girl, by Jove! like that, and be ordered away to war, and to have his own mother take the trouble to tell him that if he's killed the girl is going to console herself strumming Chopin and Grieg, meeting people, loving another fellow—yes, and marrying him and having children ——" His words broke. He glanced angrily at the floor, then back angrily at her. "It's too much of a success you're making!"

This was his exact speech. He could have told it to you himself, up to the day of his death, word for word, accent for accent.

His mother stopped. The train of her dressing-gown seemed to shrink hurriedly about her feet, as frightened as herself. She stood with a dazed look in her eyes, and said, softly:

"Reginald! You couldn't think I meant to rob you. You couldn't think I meant she does not love you, better than any one! Of course she does! Why, if you did not

come back—of course you will! It would be too horrible! But if you didn't—you would break her heart. Just think what it would mean to her! Of course I didn't mean that! But I couldn't help seeing that, no matter how broken-hearted she might be—there are other things; never just the same things—no one like you ever in all the wide world, of course—but —— Why, she had that lame brother to love, if it's no one else. She is young; she is beautiful; she has soft hands; she has her own self to look at in the glass." She looked around the room. "She has many, many interests—she has music. I only meant that if it happened —— It won't!"—she raised her thin hands a little, as though forbidding heaven to admit the bare thought. "But if it happened, I'd—I'd have—nothing! She has known you just one year, one year this midsummer, at Henley, wasn't it? And don't you see for twenty-eight years and all the nine waiting months before, I've had you—only you—nobody else; no other interests in the world; only you filling my life. I don't mean—you couldn't think I meant, what you said. But look around my life. Is there anything else in it? Isn't it bare, perfectly bare, except —— Don't you see? Don't you see?"

She looked all around the big bare room outside himself and the grate-shadows, as though to show him the emptiness.

But Merington's eyes were on her, and his old self was rushing back, rushing back stumblingly. Good God! Could he have been as dull and as brutal as that! He stalked over to the slender, lonely figure and put his arms about it. He drew her over tenderly to the chair in front of the fire. Then he got down on his knees somehow beside her. He had never done such a thing before, yet it came easy to him now.

"Mummy," he said, kissing the thin fingers and then reverently her wedding-ring, "of course I know what you mean!" He patted the delicate veined hand with little soft pats such as he might possibly have given it as a child, but never since.

She looked uncertain, not sure of anything, very un-

used to such demonstration. She seemed to want to explain it all to him again, but he had explanations to make of his own.

"Did you think I imagined I'd ever get from anybody else such love as you've given me all these years?" He spoke eagerly. He looked solemnly into the fire. "No other woman on earth will ever give me such as that."

She groped her other hand along the chair-arm and put it on top of his own. The little act was greatly demonstrative in a woman of her type.

"Oh, I didn't mean, my dear, that she doesn't love you better than she loves any one in the world," she said, insistingly.

"But, Mummy, how could she love me as well as you do? Everybody knows what a mother's love is. That is a thing you don't even have to talk about. Everybody knows."

The lines were altering in her face. Something—an expression, a shade of happiness—something was coming into it. Perhaps he did understand, in a way, as much as a woman can ever expect her children to understand.

"Why, I was talking to Barton the other day," he ran on—"you remember Barton, don't you? Barton who went to Spain, you know, to study Spanish literature and the history and all that. Well, Barton was telling me an old Spanish folk story, and, by Jove! do you know it impressed me a lot. It was about a man who loved a girl—and she put him to several severe tests to prove his love for her. Well, he met them all—glad to, you know. Then, by and by"—he looked into the fire again and dwelt a little on the words, as a good teller of tales would do, though he had never before told a tale in his life. His mother watched him, as absorbed as a child. He began again impressively—"By and by, as a supreme test, she asked him to bring her in a silver casket the heart of his mother!"

She gave a little shocked start. "Oh, my dear!"

"Well," Merington again slowed down, well pleased with himself and with her attention. "Yes, if you will believe me, the brute even did that. Yes, he did." An-

other pause, and then lightly, almost glibly: "And then do you know what happened? On the road "—this more slowly and very tellingly—" while he was taking the heart of his mother to the girl he loved—he stumbled and fell, somehow. And right away, from inside the casket, he heard the voice of his mother's heart crying out, distressed: 'Oh, my son! my son! Hast thou hurt thyself?'"

Merington, really pleased with himself, left the tale there, where it fell in dramatic silence. There was nothing to be said; the story said it all. To tell the truth, his mother scarcely grasped it. It was to her son rather than the story that she was listening; she was tasting anew the old, unbelievable wonder—that this grown young man, with his heavy hair and broad shoulders, was the same as the little son of old, once wholly dependent on her. He noticed her abstraction.

"That's what mother love is like," he said, with a fine finality.

"Well, of course," she reiterated, "I've had you all these years. Of course a mother never calls such things sacrifices, but I've done—I've done a good many little things for you."

He put his head back and laughed—a short, hearty laugh. She was delicious in her naïveté. He could see now why his father had loved her.

"Well, I should say you have! Haven't you nursed me through the measles and scarlatina and mumps and malaria? And do you think I'd ever get any other human being in the world to do for me all that you have done?"

"Oh, well, dear, a wife's duties are very great—very sacred." She could afford to be a little generous now.

"Oh, but Mummy, no man with a mother like you expects his wife to do for him what his mother did." They sat a moment silent. He recalled the cruelty of his first rebuke, the harsh words he had spoken. "Mummy, dear," he said, slowly, "I want to tell you something. You must never think that I love her as I love you. I love her as a man ought to love the woman he marries,

but no one tells you you've got to love the woman you marry as you love the woman who brought you up. The Bible tells you you've got to leave your mother and father and cleave to her, and that's a good precaution to keep a man from running back to his mother." He smiled a little at his own cleverness. "But that's not meaning a man loves his wife better than his mother. Why, just think how long you've had me! As a rule, a man has only known a girl a year or two." Merington felt very clever somehow in handing back her own argument, with the handle turned toward her.

"Well, of course," his mother said, slipping her hand up to his head, "it really isn't like being a mother. You see, I've had both." (He winced secretly at the implied and absurd assumption that she had ever loved his father as Gwendolen loved him.) "Gwendolen will understand that herself after a while. I know she loves you. But she has never watched you grow each day, nor helped you to learn to walk, nor bought you toys, nor waited for you after school. You see, I was always horribly afraid something might happen ——"

"No; and she hasn't nursed me through croup and measles and heaven knows what," he said, indulgently, rubbing one big hand comfortingly over her thin ones.

She sat a moment looking into the fire. She had hardly dreamed life could be so good. At last she got up. He got up, too, and put his arms around her. Bending back her head, he kissed her on the lips as she had never before been kissed in her life. It was a kiss—he knew this with a clear disloyal consciousness—such as he gave only to the one woman he loved.

She put her arms about and clung to him passionately. "I've been foolish, so foolish!" she murmured. She brushed one hand over her eyes. "It's the first time I've ever talked like this to you or to any one. We don't usually talk to our children this way. But to-night—the thought of your going away—of your perhaps ——"

He broke in on her words very nearly gaily. "But I am coming back to you!" Then, very soberly, "But if

I don't—listen —— You'll remember that I love you best! You'll never, never forget that!"

"Oh, my dear" (how generous she could afford to be now!), "I wouldn't say that! It might—I don't see how it ever could, but it just might—get back to Gwendolen." She clung to him an instant, then she slipped away, took up the untouched toddy from the table and again handed it to him, and said the little commonplace things that crowd in after great moments. "Take this, my dear; it will make you sleep."

"Yes, I will take it right away," he promised, and smiled.

She left him and went to the door. He sat down in his armchair facing the fire. With his fingers still around the glass he waited tensely for the click of the latch of her door down the hall. At last he heard it snap softly. Then he pushed the glass away from him. He put out a big shaking hand, drew the framed photograph of the shy-eyed girl of eighteen toward him until it was hid against his breast, ran his fingers up into his thick hair, bowed his head on his arms like a man in some agony and said softly:

"Oh, my dear, I can't, I can't, I can't leave you!"

When Lieutenant Brookby dragged Merington back from the charge in which his men had behaved like the Englishmen they were, he was staggering badly himself. He stopped a moment for breath, took his friend under the armpits again, and dragged him a few yards further. When he had at last got him behind a rock, Brookby staggered around a little dizzily, and finally settled down hard beside him. There was a dead silence between them for a space, except one, a gruff "Damn it!" from Brookby when he flung some blood from his hand as it trickled from a wound in his breast. His lips were beginning to be drawn back.

"Say, Merington, if you get there, go to see her, will you? Tell her —— No, there is no need; she knows. But tell her —— Oh, good God! the little chap!"

Merington opened his eyes heavily and looked at his

friend. "That bad? Oh, no, I won't get there. But maybe you will, after all. Say, Brookby, if you do, there are two women, you understand; two. You'll find their names here." He felt blindly for his breast. "I'd like you to tell 'em both—the same thing. See? Tell each of them I loved her best. Do you understand? Tell each of them that when I was dying —— See? It was with her name —— You understand? You're not to let the other one know ——"

Brookby did not lift his eyes from the trickling blood now. It seemed to have fascinated him.

"I'll be damned!" he said, thickly. "The little chap is eleven weeks old to-day." His knees and arms contracted in a spasm of pain. He turned over on his face and clutched at the ground. "But I'm damned proud there's no one else but the boy's mother."

Merington's lips were black. They drew together, and once he said, "My dear, I can't!" Then they opened over his white teeth and remained so.

*The Sixth Man

The Last Touch to a World Tragedy

By George Palmer Putnam

In November, 1915, I went to Paris, and from there to the Divisional Headquarters of one of the French generals close up to a certain sector of the Western Front. The general, typically courteous, was more than willing to meet us half-way in certain negotiations, and very quickly our interview was completed. I arose then, to withdraw.

"Monsieur K," said the general, "you were in Belgium last month?"

I nodded.

"Good. Pray sit down." He motioned me to a chair. I was puzzled, and flattered. Generals are busy men, with little time for chance civilians.

"Monsieur"—the old fellow spoke with a sort of grave hesitancy—"you may be able to assist me. Were you"—his fine gray eyes bored straight into me—"in Brussels on October twelfth?"

In all the calendar of my life that date can never be forgotten. Something of that must have shown in my face, for he nodded as much as to say, "I thought so."

"Now can you tell me, m'sieur, any German deed of bravery on that day in Brussels which would have merited the Order of St. George?"

I knew the Order and what it stood for: one of the most coveted of German military honors. But, familiar as I really was with the events of those trying days in

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and around the Belgian capital, I could recollect no such outstanding act as would have won this signal honor. It was scarcely conceivable that the Order of St. George would have been awarded without official Brussels—including those associated with the legations—knowing of it, for such news travels fast.

"You see the matter is somewhat peculiar," continued the general, after my negative reply. "Having no source of information covering such a point—my command is, of course, far removed from Brussels—I ventured to question you, hoping you might be able to help solve a little puzzle which our friends the Germans have set before me."

I expressed polite regret.

"What would you make of it," he continued after an abstracted pause, "if you received information coming directly through enemy channels, disclosing the presence of a German spy behind our lines?"

"A trap," I offered.

"That appeared likely at first, but there is nothing to substantiate it. I will be frank. I am talking to you in your private capacity as an American citizen, and ally of the near future." He held up his hand deprecatingly. "Oh, yes, it is coming, and pray God it may be soon!"

Then he told me that on the previous day a German airman, daredeviling behind the French lines in the shelter of low afternoon clouds, had dropped a small box in the village headquarters. It contained an envelope directed to the commanding general, which a sergeant of the military police brought in.

"Inside that envelope," the general explained, "was a brief statement setting forth that in a certain company of a certain regiment was a German spy. It described his appearance, finishing with the assertion that he carried on his person the decoration of the Order of St. George. In an hour we had our man. The medal was found sewed in the lining of his French uniform; and it was actually the only conclusive evidence of his identity. Here it is."

The general handed me the decoration, its ribbon some-

what crumpled. On the reverse side of the bronze medallion was inscribed the usual line: "For Courageous Devotion to the Fatherland." And below appeared the words: "Brussels, October twelfth, Nineteen Hundred and Fifteen"—all, of course, in German.

Pondering this, I mechanically turned the medal over and saw the name! I nearly dropped the medal to the floor!

"Ah, you know Herr Lieutenant Hans Oberhanzen?"

"No," I stammered.

"Ah!" He was the most self-controlled Frenchman I ever met.

But I was not considering him just then. My tumultuous thoughts were back in Brussels, in that little courtyard of the St. Gilles prison. I could see it all—gray, wet and cold, with dawn just breaking; the frail English woman, Edith Cavell, her eyes hidden by the white bandage, backed against the wall, and the six German soldiers with their rifles leveled at her breast, and hearing the voice of the young officer, a bit more guttural than usual: "Fire!"

"You will understand my natural curiosity to learn the nature of the lieutenant's gallantry." The general spoke evenly, as if quite oblivious of the emotion written large upon my face. I believe I was actually perspiring.

"Perhaps I can tell you." Fate seemed to have given me the key to the astounding situation; the thing was gruesomely clear.

"Ah!" He pressed together the finger tips of his handsome, well-kept hands.

"The herr lieutenant evidently won the approval of his sovereign, even though the token of it was secretly bestowed."

"And the twelfth of October?" The brows over those fine gray eyes rose questioningly.

"The day of the shooting of Edith Cavell!"

"Ah!" there was poignant vibrance in his tone. His eyes held mine, as the full meaning dawned upon him.

"Yes"—I cleared my throat—"she was executed that morning by order of the military governor—shot to

death—against a wall ——" My voice trailed off. The picture of it was so vividly real.

"And now," I proceeded, "now they're putting the last touches to the tragedy. Dead men tell no tales, you know."

"But if his act merited the decoration of St. George," said the general, "why do they want him killed now?"

Knowing what I did, the explanation was simple enough.

"Call it change of heart, for lack of a better name," I replied. "The Germans expected the execution would crush their adversaries. They thought it a splendidly horrible example, calculated to break the back of opposition, and especially the troublesome civilian activities such as spying and sniping. But they were blind and the news spread terrible anger through Belgium, instead of fear. It roused England as almost nothing else had done; recruiting jumped. The world, instead of being impressed, was nauseated. And, quite too late, German officialdom realized something of its awful error. The deed could not be undone, but at least it seemed wise to stifle for all time the few men who knew just why and how the death sentence was carried out and where the ultimate responsibility rested."

I paused.

"Ah!" The general drew in his breath. He seemed to understand.

"Now they've made the lieutenant a spy and then betrayed him. Already five of the six men of the firing squad are dead. That I know positively."

The gray eyes were fixed on me, a speculative, odd look in their depths. But he was a French gentleman, an officer of the Republic, and asked no questions.

"Let us," said he after some thought, "have the lieutenant here. I will appreciate it if you will stay; perhaps, as you Americans express it, you can joggle his memory."

As the lieutenant entered, he saluted smartly in the German way and stood at attention. The sergeant and two poilus in charge of him withdrew.

"Do you know this gentleman?" The general faced the lieutenant with the brisk question.

The lieutenant shook his head.

"That is true," said I, responding to a glance of interrogation.

"So?" Small wonder he was puzzled.

Oberhanzen himself was typical of hundreds of young Prussians of the overbearing upper class—well set up, thick-necked, with a pink face educated into hardness and disdain. His eyes were small, I remember, and just then a little furtive, in a wolfish way. But outwardly he was frigidly self-possessed. Which was rather plucky, at that, as he knew from experience what happens to spies, and how promptly it occurs.

"Do you still refuse to tell where you secured the uniform?"

"That I cannot." The German's voice was steady, and his jaws clicked together in a determined way.

"And how you got into our lines?"

He was silent, motionless, as if he did not hear. Instead of pressing the point, the general laid the medal of the Order of St. George on the table before him, placing beside it a sheet of paper taken from the table drawer. The prisoner's lips parted; I thought he would speak.

"Yes?" said the general encouragingly.

"Monsieur le General"—there was the slightest tremor in the Prussian's voice—"may I ask how you knew I had *that?* It——"

He checked himself there, on the point of saying, apparently, that it was the discovery of the medal and almost that alone which brought about his detection. Be that as it may, he eyed it as covetously as ever I saw a man regard the object of his desire. In his code it was worth a dozen deaths.

"Herr Lieutenant," responded the general gravely, "I will tell you that, and gladly, when you inform me for what patriotic act you received the decoration on the twelfth of October."

There was that about the gray-eyed officer, a some-

thing metallic in the timbre of his voice, which struck his hearer. The wolf eyes wavered. The muscles along the jowls stood out, the jaws beneath them clenched in silence.

"You will not tell? Very good, *I* will tell you, then. Herr Lieutenant Oberhanzen"—the general was cold as steel now—"on the morning of October twelfth a deed was done at Brussels for which your emperor awarded the Order of St. George. It was the shooting of Edith Cavell!"

A sneering, contemptuous sound, intended for a laugh, came from the prisoner. "I know nothing of what you say; I care not."

"That I do not doubt—that you care little." The general continued: "It really makes slight difference from your standpoint. A spy! Well, it is quickly over." As he clicked his tongue, a tremor ran through the Prussian's erect figure. "My inquiries are—shall we say in the nature of research? After dawn to-morrow no record will remain of an act which will be remembered as one of the sorriest of modern history. That is a pity. It would be so very interesting to know something of its details."

"It is absurd. You waste your time." Beneath Oberhanzen's coldness one could glimpse the hot fusing, deep down in him, of anger and bewilderment. Then he played a last card—a magnificent bit of bluff. "All I know," said he with a leer, "is that no witnesses remain."

"Ah! Then you do know about it?"

"Certainly!" The wolf eyes were downright angry now. "We all knew—and were happy because a fitting end had come to a sneaking——"

"Easy there!" I broke in. "Easy. You're talking about a woman, a dead woman!" For the life of me I could not keep silent.

"And you—who are *you?*" He turned on me in a flash, snarling, all the mask of disciplined poise fallen from him, seeming more than ever like a wolf—a trapped wolf at bay. "What do you know of this?"

"I know about as much as you do!" I blazed back

at him. And then, remembering my manners, I turned to the general with a word of apology. But that excellent gentleman with his imperturbable gray eyes flashed for me to continue, to have my say.

"Herr Lieutenant"—I am free to confess my voice shook—"I know much of you and your Order of St. George. I know how you stood at the left of your firing squad of six men there in the courtyard of St. Gilles"—he winced at that—"and ordered them to fire. I know that you then stepped over to the body, crumpled on the wet pavement, and tore a piece from the dress of the woman whose soul had risen—for a souvenir!"

"Ah!" I could hear the repressed exclamation of the Frenchman at my elbow. But my attention was on the man before me. The wolf eyes were glaring now, dilated.

"And then," I continued, "then all at once you noticed that the plaster on the wall at the side of where the woman had stood was nicked and, looking closer, you discovered that a bullet had struck there. The dust and particles were quite dry, despite the wet mist which had soaked everything else. So you knew it was one of the bullets which had just been fired. Quickly, then, you examined the body, finding only five wounds. Unquestionably one of your men had deliberately aimed well to the side. And that, Herr Lieutenant, made you angry, very angry."

"*Lieber Gott!*" The low words escaped the set lips of the Prussian.

"One man of the six had committed a crime, a grave military crime. He had disobeyed orders. But which one? Ah, there was the difficulty! And by that time your firing squad had gone. Am I right, Herr Lieutenant?"

I thought he would jump at my throat. But his only movement was to wet his lips.

"You reported at once. Orders went out to reassemble the men of the firing squad, but that took time, as they had been chosen from various commands and immediately after the execution had been sent back to their regiments,

each sternly warned never to mention what he had seen. But in the course of the day—that day when you quietly went to Grand Headquarters to receive this token of the Emperor's approval"—I held the decoration before him—" there were rounded up only five of those six men. Do you see now, Herr Lieutenant? You did not know that the sixth man was never found."

"And *you?*" The wolf eyes of Lieutenant Oberhanzen bored into me, fairly devouring my features. But disappointment and doubt were written in them; he could not recall; he could be sure of nothing.

With a curl of his lips for me, he faced the general then. He was the color of clay, but held himself rigid. "It is true." That was all he said. Then he saluted, and turned to the door and what lay beyond it for him.

"One moment, Herr Lieutenant," the general checked him. "You have told me. I will tell you now what you asked: how we knew that you carried the Order of St. George. Here!" He handed the prisoner the written sheet before him. "A German airman dropped it in the village."

We watched the face of that betrayed soldier, marveling at his self-control. The disciplined Prussian—just then the look of the wolf was clearer than ever in his eyes—never wavered. I don't think his hand even shook.

It seemed an age to us. He drank in the meaning of that message. He understood, of course, at a glance—and God knows what bitter hate must have burned within him! Then a little spot of color—amazingly bright it was in contrast to the chalkiness—crept out on each cheek. I noticed, too, that drops of perspiration were on his forehead. Most unforgetable of all, the teeth in front were biting the inside of his lower lip, grinding a piece of it, while a tiny spurt of blood oozed from his mouth.

Then, taking from the table the decoration of the Order of St. George, the general held it out toward the spy. "Here! Take it! It is yours." Lieutenant Oberhanzen took it mechanically, like a man moving in sleep. And then he went out, his head erect.

"I thought," observed the general when he was gone, "he'd like that about his neck; he appeared much attached to it."

While my friend was telling me this story I held in my hand the decoration he had passed to me. I examined it again. Its ribbon, I noted, was stained dark.

"Blood," explained my friend. "Lieutenant Oberhanzen was placed in a guard tent in a small barbed-wire corral. But that night a chance bomb from a German taube—out gunning for headquarters, probably—dropped on the corral. Two soldiers on guard and the lieutenant were killed instantly. The general told me to keep the decoration."

"But how in the world did you know those details about the execution? You weren't—surely your special work doesn't make a man go to such lengths as *that?*"

"Evidently the old general had some such notion," replied my friend with a bit of a smile. "No. That would be stretching things too far—and over-dangerous. I couldn't tell him, but I can tell you." He paused then and, taking the decoration from my hands, he wrapped the stained silken ribbon about the medal and deposited it in his vest pocket.

"I could not speak before, because the man who told me what occurred at the shooting was still alive; at least, I thought he was. And it did no harm to let Lieutenant Oberhanzen think that perhaps *I* was that sixth man whom they never found. But the truth is that the sixth member of the firing squad came to me immediately after the execution. His name doesn't matter; he was an honest, decent German clerk. He told me everything, all the beastly details, even how the lieutenant snatched a piece of the woman's dress as a souvenir. The rest of it—what occurred after the firing squad withdrew—I guessed, and from the look of Oberhanzen's face I evidently came pretty close to the truth."

"What happened to this sixth man?"

"That is the point; that is why I couldn't speak before. You see, we were neutral then, yet I committed a very unneutral act—one far worse than that for which Edith

Cavell died. The soldier clerk told me how he had fired at the wall, that he could not send his bullet into the woman. But, having done it, he was overwhelmed with fear. He had a most positive presentiment that his act would be discovered, and we both knew what that meant, although we had no idea then that a wholesale destruction of the participants had been planned."

"You helped him escape?"

"Exactly. He was hidden in my rooms until arrangements were made for him to reach a vessel going to the United States. It was not until months later—long after my meeting with the general—that I learned his boat had been sent to the bottom by a German submarine. He was drowned."

"Extraordinary!"

"Quite so." My friend lit a cigarette thoughtfully. "Fate apparently marked every man connected with the execution of that nurse. Each died at German hands. General von Sauberschweig, the military governor, was retired shortly afterward and there is an odd story of his having been accidentally killed while shooting on his estate near Baden.

"Only one man remains—the man by whose order this decoration was conferred: the Kaiser; and I wonder how *his* time will come!"

*The Godson of Jeannette Gontreau

By Francis William Sullivan

I

At five-fifteen every afternoon Jeannette Gontreau pressed the button to stop the dictating machine, removed the receiver from her dark hair and became conscious of something in the world besides Mr. Frederick Armstrong's monotonous voice. She then put away her paraphernalia, covered her typewriter and brought her day's work for the Universal Advertising Company to a full and artistic stop precisely at five-thirty.

This dark afternoon of mid-January she was inclined to hurry the proceeding, for, some hours before, gazing from her lofty aerie on lower Broadway, she had observed a Scandinavian mail ship plow up the Hudson to its berth in Hoboken, and she knew that letters from her godsons ought to be awaiting her at home; one at least—perhaps two or three. And life for Jeannette Gontreau began and ended with those godsons—as the war has named them—those four wretched prisoners her letters kept alive in German concentration camps.

But now, as usual, she restrained her impatience, for when lives hang on twenty dollars a week one must fulfil their every requirement. She had just settled her last year's hat on her head with a *chic* effect when the buzzer from Mr. Armstrong's office sounded. Jeannette's eyes flashed rebelliously and her red lips compressed. Nevertheless, she answered the summons, walking with the light, quick grace that was an inheritance from her father, Major Gontreau, Legion of Honor, deceased six months before.

Armstrong, tipped back in his chair with his hands

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clasped behind his head, smiled at her as she entered. He was a man of about forty, with a ruddy face, brown hair and an inclination to stoutness. Jeannette had been his stenographer during the two years he had been with the company, and their satisfaction with the arrangement was mutual—he with her work, she with her rather higher salary than the average. Now he glanced behind her to see that the door was shut.

"Well, how's the Grand Army, Miss Gontreau?" he asked in the manner of a genial conspirator. This was the ordinary method of reference to the godsons. "Had any more letters?"

Instantly the cool, self-sufficient business girl, as thoroughly American as her mother had been, disappeared. Jeannette's face lighted, she smiled, her eyes grew tender, mature; in short, she became a godmother. "Didn't I show you the one I got two weeks ago from Ledyard?"

"He's the American in the Foreign Legion, isn't he?" said Armstrong soberly. Then his eyes began to twinkle. "Does he still believe that you are about fifty and have gray hair and rheumatism?"

"Oh, yes! I have to tell them that. If I didn't they wouldn't confide in me and I couldn't help them. Imagine their knowing that *I* was their godmother." She laughed. "And that reminds me there ought to be letters from them to-night." She settled her worn pony coat and muff; then: "If there's nothing else, Mr. Armstrong——"

"Only this," he said, taking a check from the desk and handing it to her. "That's what I called you in for." It was his monthly contribution to the support of her Grand Army, the only reënforcement to the savings from her wages.

"Oh, thanks!" she cried with swift gratitude. "I don't know what I'd do without this! Please let me tell the boys——"

"No," he said peremptorily. "Helping this way, I have fun, but it would spoil it for me if I had to be thanked and all that rot. Let me know when you're going to pack the next box and I'll come down and help you—if it's any help."

This was the extent of Armstrong's personal efforts for the "Army." He was a bachelor, and more than once Jeannette had tried to determine whether or not his monthly box-packing visits were due to interest in herself or in her charity.

"Oh, it's a great help, really," she replied to Armstrong's deprecation. "Please come. And I'll show you the letters to-morrow if there are any." She opened the office door and smiled back at him. "Good-night."

II

The moment of leaving the office every evening was to Jeannette the moment of release into her chosen world. To-night she was oblivious of the January cold and the home-going crush on the elevated train.

She left the car at Fourteenth Street and, walking back to Twelfth, turned east and let herself into Mrs. Tibbitts' well-known hallway. During the five years since her mother's death this place had been home to Jeannette and her father, and it was still her home now that she was alone. Mrs. Tibbitts kept a rather meddlesome but really fond eye upon her, and Mrs. Tibbitts alone—except for Mr. Armstrong—knew of the Grand Army.

By the flickering gas-light Jeannette examined the wire mail racks against the wall and gave a little cry of delight as she took down a square envelope addressed in a familiar bold chirography and closed at the top by a strip bearing the words "Opened by the Censor."

Excitedly she hurried up to her room on the top floor, a room whose size compensated for its altitude, and which boasted two windows, pink-flowered wall paper and a green carpet. This apartment was known as "Grand Headquarters."

Throwing off her things, Jeannette crossed to a small black desk and sat down with the letter in her hand. But before opening it she lifted her eyes to the photographs of five men that adorned the wall above. Topmost was her father in his French uniform, his cross of the Legion of Honor on his breast—a sardonic face with fierce white mustaches and piercing black eyes. Retired

because of a wound received in Algiers, he had come to New York as representative of a Paris commercial house, and at forty had married his American secretary.

Beneath him, two on a side, were the members of the Grand Army, Jeannette's memorial to him: big, dreaming Feodor; Paul, slim and sickly; Anatole, his dark face emotional even in repose; and Ledyard.

Her eyes rested longest on Ledyard. Even in the uniform of his training days—he had had no picture taken since—he was not handsome. But it was a pleasant, youthful face in which the lurking humor about the mouth set off the earnestness that had led him to enlist in the Foreign Legion after two years as a student of architecture in Paris.

Musing, dreaming a little, she studied him. Then she opened his letter and drew out the two crowded pages of minute writing with their accompanying green addressed envelope inclosed by the Germans for her reply. She read:

WITTENBERG CAMP, GERMANY.

December 2, 1916.

Very Dear Godmother: Your last letter arrived safely, and so finally did your box with all the good things in it. As a result our godmother is exalted very high in Hut No. 3. At sight of the box Anatole—who is sitting on his straw bag in the corner making you an aluminum ring set with tricolor stones—Anatole wept. So did I, both out of courtesy to my superior officers, and because the sight of so many good things all at once is rather unnerving here. But we recovered quickly, for at last we had some use for that blessed little stove with its canned heat you sent us.

That stove is the envy of the hut. When the other chaps who, like myself, have lost an arm or something and can't work, get tired staring through the barbed wire at the flat muddy fields with their patches of snow, they come in and moon at that stove. Ah, godmother, were one to spend the rest of his life he couldn't express enough gratitude for the dear, infinitely merciful thing you are doing!

Pardon this gush, but your gray hair and rheumatic years invite the indulgence, since, after all, you are the nearest approach to a mother I have. And for that reason Anatole and I can't forgive you for not sending us your photograph. We would build a shrine for it here, we would!

Your news that Jim and Nellie and the little girls are doing so well relieves my mind. I am sure that if they will only persevere, the hard times will soon be over. *Pardon,* I am called outside by the lieutenant. Will finish later.

Jeannette chuckled delightedly. Through the persons of Jim and Nellie and the little girls she conveyed to him the doings of England and France and the Allies. She could imagine some benevolent old German papa at the prison censor's desk following the monthly doings of this entertaining American family. She turned to the next page of the letter and was suddenly stabbed by daggers of exclamation.

Godmother! Godmother! I'm coming home! I'm coming home! I have just seen the lieutenant. They are going to release me. With my left arm useless, of course I can't fight again, and here I'm just one more to feed, if you call (deleted by censor). It seems as if I couldn't wait. America! Oh, if you knew how I long to get back!

Anatole knows the truth and is howling. It will be a week before the train of disabled leaves. I wonder what it will be like over there. But first of all my home-coming is going to be a pilgrimage to a shrine, to the shrine of a saint with whitening hair and rheumatism and the heart of a girl. Promise me again you will keep well. To think of you tramping out every day and slaving in an office while I sit here helpless. Don't go out in the snow without your rubbers! I know New York at this time of year.

She had to peer hard to decipher the last crowded words:

Please, will you send Anatole insect powder and carbolic soap? Will write again when know departure definitely. Love.

HARRY LEDYARD.

Jeannette's hands dropped to her lap and, for a little, with eyes shining, she sat lost in thoughts and emotions not ordinarily associated with godmothers. He was homing straight to her; to age and ugliness and pain, for all he knew. She experienced a sensation as if some one had twanged a glad harp within her.

But then uprose a dismaying consciousness of her youth and her deception and, like a bird suddenly alarmed, she poised as if for flight. For while still a prisoner at a safe distance one's godson may well be an object of pity, sacrifice and love, released he becomes a predatory and dangerous male person.

After supper Jeannette took her letter and her problem to Mrs. Tibbitts, who inhabited a large square back parlor on the ground floor of the old-fashioned dwelling.

The landlady, dressed in black silk with white lace at collar and wrists, her fingers at work on a gigantic pair of socks for Feodor, afforded no relief when Jeannette broke the news to her.

"The idea of his coming home like this when he's supposed to stay there!" she cried. "It isn't decent. It puts a child like you in such a position!" (Jeannette was twenty-three.) "Your father would never have thought of letting you meet him. How do you know what he is? And that Foreign Legion is full of black sheep."

Mr. Armstrong was no more encouraging when she showed him the letter.

"Oh, I don't think he's a criminal," he demurred from Mrs. Tibbitts' suggestion; "but all the same you don't know what he is. Fortune hunter is more likely, a fellow that thinks you're old and have a little put by that he can get hold of by looking after you a few years. Better be careful and go slow on this, Miss Gontreau."

For a week the problem remained in abeyance. Then it was forced to decision by a hasty scrawl sent by way of Holland and stating that Ledyard was to leave Wittenberg two days after writing and would take the first ship he could catch from Christiania. It also confided that he and Anatole had unearthed one Jules, whom they considered a worthy recruit to the Army, and would Jeannette please ship him a supply of insect shrapnel? It concluded with fervent gratitude and affection.

The news of Jules necessitated the repacking of a box Jeannette had begun for Anatole, and when Armstrong heard of it he made one of his calls, an event chaperoned

by Mrs. Tibbitts, during which Grand Headquarters was transferred to her luxurious back parlor.

The fact that Ledyard was on the way reduced the session to a council of war.

"It's certainly not right for the child to see him," was Mrs. Tibbitts' final word as she knitted, rocking, while the other two knelt by the yawning box in the middle of the floor.

"Oh, Miss Gontreau can take care of herself," opposed Armstrong. "But suppose he's an undesirable somebody you wouldn't want to see after the first time, but who would try to take advantage of your kindness."

"M-mm!" conceded Jeannette. "I hadn't thought of that."

"Look here: how would this do?" Armstrong exclaimed. "Ledyard will expect to meet an elderly lady, so why not let Mrs. Tibbitts meet him and size him up first?"

"Oh, dear, really," said that lady in agitation. "What would I have to do?"

Armstrong enlightened her in some detail, while Jeannette, a slim figure in a close-fitting black dress, still sat back on her heels pondering, brow wrinkled to a thoughtful sternness under its unruly dark hair. Then she seemed to come to some decision. There were times when the American half of her rose and took charge, and this was one of them.

"Look here," she now remarked: "you people seem to think this is *your* godson! It seems to me if anybody can judge him I can, and I'm going to do it. I shall meet him, but I'll be the old lady! I'll get a gray wig, and practice limping with rheumatism, and Nannie here can lend me her glasses. Yes, that's the way to do it, and you can both help me. That's how I'm going to meet my godson!"

After vainly counter-attacking for half an hour, Mrs. Tibbitts and Mr. Armstrong sought instructions.

III

From where she sat facing the door of the back parlor,

Jeannette heard Mrs. Tibbitts admit her godson. It was Saturday afternoon, and, in answer to his note sent from the hotel the day after landing, she had told him to come then.

"Yes, Miss Gontreau is in," said the landlady. "Come this way, please."

Jeannette swallowed with unexpected suddenness. Sitting thus with her back to the light, she looked her part. An almost white wig subdued any unseemly tendency of her dark hair, and her rather shapeless dark serge dress successfully concealed any hint of youthful curves. As befitting her years, and better to conceal her features, she wore a pair of nose-glasses attached by a gold chain to a spring reel on her chest. Upon an adjacent table was grouped the Grand Army.

There were firm approaching footsteps, and the next moment he stood in the doorway, tall, straight and slender. Expecting to see the boyish-looking recruit of her photograph, Jeannette's heart failed her as she looked into that thin, worn face and endured the steady, piercing gaze of his hollow eyes. Momentarily she asked herself if this were really he; then she began to find possible resemblances of feature and expression. Still, she hadn't thought his hair—brushed back from his forehead in the familiar way of the photograph—was so blond.

But when he spoke she forgot her doubts.

"Godmother!" he cried gladly, tenderly, and came across the room toward her. She noticed that his left arm was the one that he could never use. She held out her hand, and, as he took it in his, he dropped to one knee and kissed it. The action, so un-American, stirred something in her, and the blood of her fathers spoke.

"Godson!" she said softly. "Defender of France!"

It was as if she had knighted him.

When he rose his eye caught sight of the pictures on the table.

"The Grand Army of Mademoiselle Gontreau!" he said, and saluted. Then, turning to her again: "I wonder if you know how truly you are Joan of Arc to us!"

"Oh, la, la!" she cried in genuine deprecation, though

her eyes were moist. "After the war my godsons will forget me—which is right."

"Godmother!" It was almost a shout of outraged manhood. "Forget you! What ungrateful brutes you must think we are! If the others feel as I do we can never forget you, and our children and grandchildren shan't either, as long as we live."

His children and grandchildren! But he hadn't said he was —— She peered at him through her glasses, absurdly fearful.

"And you found your family quite well when you got back?" she inquired.

"Family?" he laughed. "I haven't a soul in the world except you. And now I'm going to make it my business to look after you if you'll let me."

Jeannette experienced a chill. Just such sentiments as these had Mr. Armstrong put into the mouth of his fortune hunter.

"Indeed I won't let you!" she retorted with spirit. "I've got along so far without being looked after, so I guess I can struggle on a little longer."

He laughed out. At her request he had seated himself, and now he faced her from a deep chair.

"That's just like some of the remarks in your letters," he twinkled. "Sometimes I would have sworn you didn't have a gray hair to your head. But what I meant was that it distressed me to have you slaving for us ——" He waved toward the pictures. "If you would only let me try and make up for it a little—take you to the theater or the opera, or out to lunch or dinner, or something."

For a moment this held out delectable possibilities. Then the caution in which she had drilled herself warned her.

"That's charming and thoughtful of you, godson," she said; "but perhaps—later. This time of year my rheumatism, you know." She gave an experimental little groan. "The office is about all I can manage. But if you'd like to see me, do come here."

His face fell with disappointment, but he agreed. "Of course. You know I will do anything you ask."

Jeannette sighed with relief, and, in order to get the conversation on less personal grounds, took from the table a couple of letters she had written the night before, one to Anatole and the other to Paul, the Belgian in Sennelager. Her father had always spoken French with her, and she wrote the language with sufficient fluency to carry on this correspondence. From his years in Paris and the army, Ledyard was thoroughly at home in the tongue, and now he plunged with delight into the operations of Grand Headquarters. He begged permission to write post-scripts to both letters, and offered to mail them when he left.

She had to hold the sheets for him while he wrote, and this dependence, after his extravagant desire to look after her, touched her.

Absorbed in the work, the time flew and the early winter darkness had descended before he remembered the length of his stay. She sealed the outer envelopes, stamped them and gave him the letters. He begged that he might come again soon, and when she had granted permission he took his leave. That evening a great bunch of Killarney roses came for her bearing his card.

This, with what Mrs. Tibbitts had been able to overhear from the landing, convinced that lady that he was a perfectly worthy godson; but Mr. Armstrong was not quite so ready to concede the fact.

"Considerate and thoughtful, eh? And little attentions like roses? Just what I expected. If I were after some nice old lady's wages I'd go at it just that way. And I'd like to see his face when he finds out what you really are."

Remarkably enough, Jeannette came to find something very disturbing about that eventuality after Ledyard had called several times in the wake of approximately a haycock of roses. More than the aged themselves did Godmother Gontreau hate her superannuation: more difficult each time was the effort to restrain the young, unreasoned impulses he seemed to arouse.

There was irony in the fact that Jeannette now found her part irksome. She discovered that it was one thing

to assume years and another to get rid of them. Every added day made the situation more difficult, and she refused his invitations with less and less conviction.

One noon, knowing that the foreign mail was to leave in a few days, she did not go out to lunch, but remained at her desk writing letters to the Army. She had just finished one to Paul when she heard the telephone in Armstrong's office ring, and the next minute he came out to tell her that Ledyard was on the wire.

The latter immediately plunged into details of certain new regulations of the British authorities regarding boxes mailed to prisoners. He said they would have to hurry to finish the one they were packing for Feodor, and advised her to go out that noon and get what articles she still needed. He finished by asking if he might come and help with the packing that night.

"Oh, yes," she assured him, "and I'll rush out and get the things now in my lunch hour."

She did so, sweeping her letters into a drawer and putting her wraps on as she went.

That afternoon, as she was starting for home laden with her purchases, Armstrong stopped her to ask if he might call the following evening. As Ledyard had not signified a desire to come then, she agreed, as she preferred to entertain them separately. The two men had met once or twice at Grand Headquarters, but on such occasions had exhibited a slight constraint which had extracted from the evenings what little joy still remained in them for Jeannette.

When Ledyard came they spent a merry evening. The packing of the box was the chief occupation and it proceeded slowly, not alone from the afflictions of the packers, but because of the numberless digressions that seemed to crop up on the slightest provocation. But the work could not be finished. A consignment of luxuries Ledyard had ordered had failed to arrive, and they had to wait for it. Ledyard announced that he would come the next night to complete the job, and Jeannette, though she knew that Armstrong was coming then, could not bring herself to refuse him.

As Ledyard was leaving he noticed on the table Jeannette's letter to Paul, which she had brought home with her.

"Have you inclosed the little Belgian flag you always send him?" he asked. It was her custom to include in each letter to a member of her Army the flag of his nation—Ledyard treasured a dozen miniature Stars and Stripes.

"No, I didn't have time to get one," she complained, laughing. "You hurried me so to-day."

"Let me take the letter, and I'll buy one and put it in and mail it," he offered, and she accepted gladly.

IV

The next night Armstrong was the first to arrive, but Ledyard followed him closely, and Jeannette lost little time in directing attention to the business in hand. Mrs. Tibbitts brought the delayed articles, which had arrived that day, and the two men knelt on opposite sides of the box and commenced to pack it. Matters had just got well under way when the house bell rang sharply, and, as the servant was out, Mrs. Tibbitts went to the door. A moment later those in the room heard a man's voice ask for Miss Gontreau. Caught in her disguise, and not knowing what to expect, Jeannette sat helpless. Ledyard and Armstrong after a moment's hesitation rose.

Footsteps approached, and Mrs. Tibbitts entered the room followed by two men. One was stocky and red-faced and had a mustache, and the other was tall and clean-shaven. Inside the threshold they halted.

"Miss Jeannette Gontreau?" asked the stocky man.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm sorry, miss, but you'll have to come with us." He threw back his coat and displayed on its under side the metal badge of the Federal Secret Service. "You are charged with sending naval secrets of the United States to Germany through your letters to prisoners."

The room became absolutely still. Jeannette slowly grew white, unable to speak. It was Armstrong who first recovered himself.

"What! Why —— Look here, this is nonsense!" he cried angrily. "I am Miss Gontreau's employer, and I know all about her work with prisoners. She'd no more think of sending information to Germany than you would. This is an outrage!"

The detective made no reply, but drew from his inside pocket a letter which Jeannette instantly recognized as the one she had written to Paul the day before.

"Did you write this letter?"

"Yes, but there's nothing in it that ——"

"What about this?" He turned over the first sheet and revealed on its back some writing in a faint violet ink, unmistakably in Jeannette's hand. "That came out under acid test," he stated, fixing her with a piercing gaze.

Dumbly she read certain information regarding the naval forces of the United States. "That! I never saw it before, I didn't write it, I don't know anything about it!" she cried desperately as a conception of all that this charge implied rushed over her.

"See here," broke in Ledyard angrily, "you men are on the wrong track entirely. This sweet old lady is no more guilty of this than you are. She's an angel! She's ——"

Thompson, the agent, disregarded him.

"You say you didn't write it," he said suavely to Jeannette. "Well, did any one have access to this letter after it left your hands?"

Jeannette opened her mouth to speak, remembering how she had given the letter to Ledyard the night before. Then, knowing his innocence, she did a godmotherly thing.

"No," she said, and her eyes involuntarily sought Ledyard's. But a sudden shock ran through her to find in them a strange, fierce gaze she could not interpret. For a long moment they plumbed each other's souls.

"All right," said Thompson with finality, picking up his hat; "then I'll have to ask you to come along with us, miss."

Ledyard stood with bent head, his pale face reflecting

some tremendous mental effort or struggle. Then, as Thompson advanced toward Jeannette, Ledyard suddenly straightened and stepped to meet him.

"Wait a minute," he said. "I've got something to say. I wrote that message. I had access to that letter last night because I mailed it for Miss Gontreau. She's forgotten that, and it's idiotic to let you accuse her any longer." Then he looked back to Jeannette, and went on, almost painfully: "And that isn't all. I have another confession to make, godmother: I am not Harry Ledyard of the Foreign Legion. You will find Harry Ledyard still in Wittenberg prison. I am Lieutenant Peter Kleinhans of the Prussian Guard, disabled. I used Ledyard's passports to get into this country." His heels clicked and he bowed.

To Jeannette his words were the words of a nightmare.

"Search him, Joe," said Thompson.

It seemed as if the world were collapsing under her feet. Half-forgotten memories took on a strange significance. She recalled the day of his arrival, and remembered his almost complete unlikeness to the Ledyard of her photograph; the unexpected blondness of his hair, his rigid military bearing that had never diminished. All these became now bitterly sure proofs of his astounding statement.

The tall, clean-shaven detective who had been searching Kleinhans uttered an exclamation as he seized a worn envelope bearing both British and German censors' stamps, and drew out the letter inside. This again Jeannette recognized as one of hers, apparently written several months before. Thompson looked it through quickly.

"Part of this is gone," he said. "Where's the rest of it?"

Kleinhans shrugged.

"I don't know. I only used that as a model for Miss Gontreau's handwriting."

Jeannette heard him as in a dream. The man she had known as Ledyard a German, an enemy of France, a betrayer of America! A spy who had not only used her whom he believed to be an old woman, but, more cruel

still, had played with the liberty of the true Ledyard, her helpless godson!

To think that this was the same man who had revealed such boyish charm, such solicitude, almost veneration, toward her. Memories that had stolen into her heart and won it wholly rushed over her, and she knew at last that she loved him. It had taken this desperate moment to crystallize the realization, but there was no longer any doubt.

And they were taking him to prison, perhaps to death!

Her surroundings swam before her eyes, and an impulse to sacrifice herself for him, to take upon herself his guilt, swept over her. After all it was *her* handwriting in the letter. . . .

But only for a moment. He was a German soldier!

Memory, tradition, blood and race reasserted themselves. Her head lifted slowly, and she bade him farewell with her eyes. . . .

They were making ready to go. The air of tense excitement had relaxed. Mrs. Tibbitts stirred in the chair where she had sat like a statue, while Armstrong moved about the room, his genial smile gradually reasserting itself.

Suddenly Kleinhans turned toward him.

"Achtung!" ("Attention!") he snarled in the snarl of a Prussian officer on the parade ground.

Caught off his guard, Armstrong turned, straightened, and his hand half rose to the salute. Then, realizing, he tried to dissemble the action. But his face was blanched.

"There's your man," said Ledyard quietly. And then, as Armstrong leaped for the door: "Quick! Get him!"

A rush, a sharp, desperate struggle, and Armstrong was a prisoner.

V

Acting on Ledyard's instructions, Jeannette took from the table his black leather wallet which had been thrown there with his other belongings, and ripped out the stitching along one side with Mrs. Tibbitts' scissors. He then

drew carefully from the open flap a piece of paper which had been browned as by heat.

"Here's the missing sheet of that letter you found in my pocket," he told Thompson. "One side of it, as you see, is part of the letter, and the other is writing in Miss Gontreau's hand, such as you found in the letter I mailed last night. I received this in Wittenberg prison last November."

Thompson looked at him.

"Then you *are* Ledyard?"

"Yes. My having this letter proves it, and I can prove it in half a dozen other ways to-morrow morning.

"Now the day I got this letter in Wittenberg," he went on, "I was reading it when I dropped this sheet almost in the flame of the alcohol stove Miss Gontreau had sent me. I rescued it in time, but this writing had come out. For a moment I suspected Miss Gontreau, but only for a moment. I was convinced that some one was working through her.

"I got the sheet out of Germany with me—never mind how—and I've been working on the case ever since I arrived in New York. I finally eliminated everybody but Armstrong here, but I didn't have the actual proof to convict him. You fellows came in here to-night before I was ready, and nearly ruined everything.

"Armstrong's name is not Armstrong at all, but Franz Nagel. He is a Prussian sergeant who has lived for years in English-speaking countries, and was in Canada when the war broke out. He came here, got a job with the National Advertising Company, and has been sending information to Germany in one way or another ever since. Isn't this true, Nagel?" he demanded of the prisoner.

It has been curiously noted in all such cases that the guilty suspect has frankly admitted his guilt, a phenomenon due, it is said, to a desire to shield those "higher up." Armstrong was no exception.

"Yes," he said without hesitation.

"When did you tamper with that letter I mailed to Paul last night?"

"Yesterday noon, after you had called Miss Gontreau on the telephone and she had left the office."

As Jeannette Gontreau listened, much that had been obscure in the past became plain. Her more than generous salary, Armstrong's interest in her Army, particularly since her father's death, when his help had been most needed; his desire to remain concealed as a benefactor, but to share in their letters and hers; his pretended interest in herself—all these things arranged themselves simply for what they were.

Thinking back, Jeannette could remember half a dozen occasions when, through his specious kindness, he had got possession of her innocent letters.

Worse than all was the realization of the dastardly indifference with which he had jeopardized her, had misused her trust in him and the sharing of her dearest secrets.

She burned with hurt and shame, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. She forgot for the time being that the whole world had been similarly duped and played upon for years, and that only through such humiliation as hers could the way be opened to tear out the evil by the roots.

"But why on earth did you say you were a Prussian officer?" Thompson was demanding of Ledyard.

"For this reason," he replied: "I was morally certain of Armstrong's guilt, but, as I say, I had no sure proof. I had to make him reveal himself somehow, for you fellows were going to take Miss Gontreau off and he would have got clean away. He thought I was his superior officer, and when I called him to attention the old military instinct of obedience was too strong for him. It was a long shot, but it worked."

. . . . . .

After Ledyard, promising to return shortly, had left the house with the other three men, Jeannette sat a moment in thought. Then suddenly she seemed to reach some decision. She got up and crossed to where Mrs. Tibbitts still sat mute.

"Nannie," she said in a certain, seldom employed tone, "I want to talk to Mr. Ledyard alone for a few minutes when he returns."

The landlady recognized both the tone and the futility of argument, and obediently got up. But there was a little of the old fire left.

"I'll give you five minutes," she said, thin, high-bridged nose well in the air. "Remember the time of night."

. . . . . .

When Ledyard returned to Grand Headquarters he saw waiting for him under the gas-light a young woman with a wealth of dark hair, a sweet pale face and very anxious dark eyes. He stopped short and passed his hand across his eyes as if to clear them. But the vision did not change. He stared long, trying to comprehend.

"Godmother!" he said uncertainly.

"Yes, godson," she said, a sweet light in her face. "I am the godmother that was old and rheumatic. Didn't you guess?"

"B-but—but—I don't understand!" he cried, bewildered, walking toward her and worshiping her face. "I knew you were young in spirit. I loved that even in your letters. But to find you a girl! Why? *Why* did you do it?"

"Would my godsons have trusted and confided in me if they had thought I was like this?" she asked simply.

"But when I came," he said almost fiercely, compelling her eyes to meet his, "why did you deceive me?" And then, before she could answer: "Forgive me; I am beginning to understand." There was a silent pause while he thought.

"You were right," he said. . . . "But I have tried to be worthy. . . . Do you remember when I offered to devote my life to looking after you and you wouldn't let me? Well, that offer still holds good, but I won't take no this time. Jeannette, look at me!"

There was the snap of a watch-case at the head of the stairs and slow steps descending.

"You'll have to be quick," he said; "here comes your Nannie."

She *was* quick.

*A Son of Belgium

By Robert W. Sneddon

In a corner of the Place de la Monnaie, Brussels, is a comfortable tavern, which, before the war, was frequented by the officials of the general post-office occupying one side of the square. There, at the midday hour, they could be seen enjoying their brune, faro, or lambic beer and puffing with great content at their ten-centime cigars. Scotch ales and German brews were on sale there, too, to attract the tourists who came to get mail at the poste restante, and on a warm summer day all kinds of accents could be heard. Madame, the proprietress, herself, had a word for each of her customers in his own tongue. English, French, German—she knew them all.

She was a comely woman of forty, Madame Lahaye, of medium height, just escaping the charge of leanness, with a slight down upon her upper lip, who wore her black dress with quite an air. She was not the innkeeper of lusty life who would have gained immortality from the brush of Teniers, Hals, or Van Ostade; if anything, she was rather reserved in manner, keeping her place and that of her clientele. A widow, they said, with one child, a boy of thirteen, still in the stage of short socks upon long legs, a bag of school-books on his shoulder. Yet, in spite of madame's dignified manner, as she sat behind her latticework cash desk in winter and at a table just outside the door in summer, her hands always busy with some piece of sewing, there was a something about her that caused a too forward postal clerk to say one day:

"For all her demure looks, I'll wager madame has

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known something else. A woman with eyes like that is no nun."

The old head waiter, André, overheard him, and for a week on end served the careless fellow warm beer until a recantation was made in person to madame, who looked at the offender straightly with her black eyes and then said very gently:

"That was not nice of you, my friend."

Still, in spite of the fact that no breath of suspicion was ever attached to madame's good name, there were certain indications of coquetry—the heavy gold earrings of Flemish workmanship that emphasized the smallness and the pinkness of her ears, the quality of the silk stockings and shoes that brought into prominence the fact that her feet and ankles were adorably shaped, even if not tiny, and her carefully kept and polished finger nails.

The service of the tavern was conducted successfully by André, a dried-up old fellow, with heavy feet; Mark, a younger edition, with plastered hair and a grin; and a stout Flemish girl, who did the washing, cleaning, and other odd jobs.

When the Germans occupied Brussels, horse, foot, and artillery, generals, colonels, captains, and lieutenants, regiments of officials who had had their appointments docketed in secret pigeonholes for years until "the Day," things were very little changed for madame. Mark, to be sure, had gone to join his colors some time before; the Flemish girl had been sent away into safety; and only André was left to raise and lower the awnings, to polish the tables and the silvered napkin holders, to water the shrubs and serve the customers, in addition to fulfilling his duties as watch-dog to madame. The clientele, too, was now made up of the uniformed officials who had taken possession of the post-office, and officers lodged in the Hotel de la Poste and other neighboring caravanseries.

But madame went about her business as usual. She had now become a wheel in the machinery of German efficiency. Beer was needed for its harmonious work-

ing, and so the word went forth among the comfort-loving officials of the posts and telegraphs that official favor, clemency, and protection were extended to the tavern, and the cobbled square set with tables in front thereof, and the occupants in service therein, provided the beer was cool, the service civil, and the prompt payment of scores not too stringently enforced.

As usual, madame sat at her table with her sewing and her darning. What she thought of what was happening elsewhere, no one could tell from her placid face. She responded to the salutation of the masters with a quiet smile that gave no clew.

It was only when the lights were put out in the tavern, when, in the few moments before going to bed, the little company of three gathered about the table, with its white-and-red-checkered cloth, which stood in the middle of the private sitting-room, that she relaxed her self-control and let the haunting terror creep from its hiding place in her brain into her eyes. Then could be seen three white faces in the candle-light—the old man's, wrinkled and brown-spotted, working nervously; the boy's with a sternness strange for one so young, a subdued fire in the eyes he had inherited from his mother; and madame's, which the guttering single candle invested with dark shadows beneath the still darker eyes. It was as if they waited each night for the tramp of heavily booted feet, the harsh, imperative summons to open, and the crushing blow of the mailed fist, still bloody with the massacre of old men, women, and children.

There was little conversation, and that little limited by tacit consent to the affairs of the tavern, and then madame, with a sigh, would rise to her feet, embrace Frans with a kiss that lingered on lips each day becoming firmer, place her hand on the shoulder of the old waiter in a caress that spoke of her affection for him, and, standing a moment at her bedroom door as if to take a last look about the silent room, would close the door softly upon the old man and the boy.

And so two years went by.

One night the two who were left in the sitting-room sat

silent until at last the old man tiptoed to the door, listened, and returned.

"Madame your mother is sleeping, my boy. It is time we go to bed."

"Ah, no, André! Last night you promised to tell me about the old guildsman."

"Eh! Frans Anneessens. Was it that?"

"Yes."

André leaned forward with a sly look at the doors and lowered his voice to a faint whisper:

"Well, it was during the time that Brabant was held by the cursed Austrians under the Governor de Prié, a terrible rascal and a cruel. He was all for screwing money out of the good craftsmen of our city—just as to-day—and when they rebelled, why, he took five of those who had resisted him and his unjust taxes. Among them was a fine old man, Frans Anneessens, a turner of chairs, whom every one loved and esteemed."

"And what did they do to him, André?"

"They cut off his head in the market-place, yes—near two hundred years ago. He gave his life for liberty. Ah, why am I not younger and strong?" added the old man in a fierce whisper. "We showed the Germans once before what we of Brussels could do to them—and now they are here again and we are slaves! Hush! Here comes the night patrol. To bed, my boy!"

And the old man blew out the candle, leaving them to grope their way to bed.

Frans clenched his fists as he lay in his room, repeating to himself over and over, as he listened to the tramp of the night patrol:

"I thank the good God I am Belgian, Belgian, of the race of Frans Anneessens, of the race of Albert, our king!"

One day, madame, returning from Notre Dame du Sablon, where she had said her prayers under the watching eye of a German sentry, stopped suddenly and shrank within the shelter of a doorway as an automobile went down the steep street at a reckless pace. She had only caught a glimpse of the officer who rode in it, stiff-

backed, grim-visaged, but that glance had been enough to set her heart trembling, so that it was some time before she could proceed. And when she did, the feeling of deadly nausea which came over her made her stop again and again to lean against the walls for support.

It was as if she had discovered a deadly snake curled up in the bed of her son.

Yet when she reached the tavern, she had regained her composure. She answered the salutations of the clientele with her usual pleasant smile, and then went into her bedroom. Before the crucifix she knelt with anguished eyes, imploring pardon for her weaknesses and strength and divine protection in whatever trials might come to pass.

It was the last time she went beyond the tavern and its terrace for many a long day, and she never came out into the warm sunshine without examination of the drinkers at the tables. To add to her cares, she was disturbed by the behavior of Frans, never a talker, who seemed more taciturn than ever, yet always on the point of breaking out into angry speech. She caught him eyeing the chattering German officers with sullen contempt. When she spoke to him gently, he turned on her fiercely:

"And why not, *maman?* I am Belgian—and these hogs—German!"

She started back as if he had struck her in the face, and, frightened by her shrinking silence, Frans ran to her and, putting his arms about her, asked anxiously what was the matter.

She drew herself up with an effort that left her pale.

"Nothing, my son, nothing. Only you must not speak that way. Some one may hear you."

"Let them! I am not afraid!"

"Oh, but for my sake, Frans, for my sake! You must be here to protect me!"

"And I shall, *chère maman,*" he assured her, with set chin and eyes ablaze with a somber passion.

"You will not go away from the tavern?" she pleaded with him. "Promise me! It is so dangerous!"

He shook his head and looked away, and she had to be content with that assurance.

One day an urgent message to go and see a sick friend came to her in the morning. She hesitated, then ordered André to take good charge of the tavern and Frans; and, the old man having given her his word, she went off.

When she came hurrying back shortly after noon, the tables outside were bare of customers. At one of them sat André, his head upon his arms. She spoke to him sharply, and he raised his head, his blinking old eyes full of tears.

"It was not my fault, madame, I swear it!" he said hoarsely. "I did my best."

She looked at him, terrified. His clothing was torn and dust-covered.

"What has happened? Where is Frans? Quick! Tell me!"

The old waiter staggered to his feet and gulped:

"They took him away, madame. I tried to stop them, and they beat me. See!"

She saw the discoloration on his bruised face and arms.

"What was it? What happened? Is my boy hurt?" she cried, looking about her with staring eyes.

"It was this way, madame. We had quite a crowd at noon, and Frans was helping me serve the officers. The poor boy was running here and there with the glasses, and in his hurry he upset a glass of lambic over the boots of a lieutenant—a young beast with a glass in his eye. Frans made his excuses, the poor boy, and bent down to wipe off the boots of the officer, and the dog—he kicked him in the mouth and laughed and said, 'The best place for a German boot.' Let me tell you all, madame. Frans drew himself up to his feet again and looked at him. Then something gave way within him. What a look he gave the Boche before he sprang at him with his naked hands!"

"But did you do nothing, you?" Madame Lahaye demanded fiercely. "I left you in charge!"

"Ah, madame," André answered piteously, "I did! I came forward—they sent me sprawling, and——"

"Oh, my poor boy! And he fought well?"

"Like a lion, madame, but what could he do? The lieutenant was bigger, heavier than he, but Frans gave him what he deserved, what he deserved!"

"But where is Frans now?"

"They were separated, and the lieutenant had him arrested."

"They took him away—where?"

"To see the deputy governor, madame, I heard them say."

"But the fault was the officer's! My Franz did nothing but protect himself!"

"Ah, madame, they have shot hundreds of us down for even trying to take ourselves out of harm's way—aye, even when we stood by like sheep! Do you not know that the proclamation says that any one resisting the authority of an officer or soldier under arms will be shot?"

"Shot?"

"Alas, yes, madame, and ——"

The old waiter's voice quavered into silence.

"What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do? Tell me, André! You are a man!"

"An old, foolish man, mistress. Sit you down. There may be some spy watching us."

He wrinkled his brows; then gave a low exclamation:

"*Dame,* I have it! Do you know the little stout German who comes here from the post-office—Herr Kronen—who has charge of the official mails? He is friendly to you, madame. Do you remember the time he sent those shameless ones from the rue Persil, who came hunting in the tavern, back to their house? Go across to the post-office and see him, madame. He may advise you."

"Stay there, then," and madame ran across to the post-office.

A sentry barred her way gruffly, but a passing clerk recognized her and took her up-stairs to Herr Kronen's department.

The little stout man looked up sharply; then his eyes opened wide.

"Unexpected pleasure, fräulein. Be seated. What can I do for you?"

"My son is arrested," said madame curtly, her eyes heavy with pain. "Whom shall I see about it?"

"Arrested! So!"

Herr Kronen's smiling welcome faded from his round face, and he stirred uneasily in his cushioned seat.

"What for?"

Madame told him.

"I can do nothing," the official said at last coldly, "nothing. You have read the proclamation. No! Then permit me to recommend your attention to it. It is correct."

Madame rose to her feet and looked down at him.

"Then you can give me no advice?"

He pursed his lips and fidgeted with the writing materials in front of him.

"I can give you no advice officially, no. But," he continued hastily, as she turned on her heel, "apply in person to the deputy governor, Herr Oberst Boehm."

"Colonel Boehm!"

"Precisely. And above all, do not mention my name. It is better so, eh?"

"Yes. Thank you."

She left the room hurriedly. Herr Kronen wiped his moist forehead nervously.

"Those cursed women!" he muttered to himself. "Whew! I am glad it is she, not I, that is going to see the Herr Oberst! Whew!"

André sprang to his feet as she came swiftly across the square.

"You have seen him? What did he say?"

"I am going to see the deputy governor. Wait here."

"But, madame," the old waiter faltered, "let me go! You are a woman, and those men ——-"

Madame Lahaye shook her head. Her eyes were aflame.

"I am not afraid, André. I shall come back unharmed—this time. Go inside and wait."

Colonel Boehm had learned, in his forty-nine years of

life, that while it was sometimes costly to grant audience to a woman coming on an unknown errand, there was also a chance that something might be gained.

"What sort of a woman?" he asked the sergeant.

"Quite a lady, Herr Oberst."

"I mean looks—good-looking, eh?"

"She wore a veil, Herr Oberst."

"No chance of her carrying a pistol with her?" suggested the colonel, with a grim smile that showed misshapen teeth. "Well, if need be, I can search her myself. Stay within call. She may have some information for us, though God knows we get little of that from any of those tight-mouthed Belgians!"

Madame Lahaye was ushered into the anteroom occupied by the colonel and advanced a few steps forward to the desk lit by a single electric reading lamp on a swivel stem. Behind it she could see the impressive figure of the deputy governor in his field uniform. She stood trying to recover her composure.

"Well, you wish to see me, madame? What is your business?"

She trembled from head to foot at the sound of his voice. It seemed as if there was no communicating channel between her brain and her lips.

"Sit down. What is it? I have no time to waste."

She sat down in the chair in front of the desk.

"My son—my son ——"

An endless repetition of the two words rang through her brain, and again the impassable barrier of emotion rose in front of her effort to speak.

"Yes, yes. Your son—what of him?"

With a sudden jerk of his hand, he turned the hooded light so that its glare, like a search-light in miniature, illumined her quivering features. Suddenly he started, leaned forward, and then slowly drew himself back against his chair.

"An unexpected pleasure to meet an old friend," he said in a harsh and constrained tone. "What can I do for you, Mademoiselle Couzens? Or you say you have a son? You are married?"

"Yes."

"And your husband?"

"Dead. Six years ago."

"Ah, you married after you left Köln, eh?"

"Yes. I—I married."

"I am happy to hear that. I fear you were not particularly happy as governess in my father's house."

Madame Lahaye bent her head.

"No," she faltered at last.

"Well, that was quite some time ago. You have had time to forget your"—he hesitated for the word—"perplexities, eh? Anyway, you can't blame me for having tried to make your life a little bit more bearable."

Colonel Boehm stroked his mustache with a sly smile.

Madame Lahaye's hands twitched in nervous clasping and unclasping. She scarcely seemed to hear what he was saying.

"Well, that's an old story. You're looking well, and—might I say so?—prosperous. You married well? A Brussels man, eh?"

"Yes."

He stared at her with narrowed eyes. The monosyllables, dragged, as it were, by torture from her, set his mind to wondering. What did the woman want?

"You're in need of money, perhaps?"

"No!"

"Then what? What do you want with me? I am busy."

Something in the imperative nature of his tone loosened the bonds of her speech.

"I want my son, my son Frans."

"What in God's name have I to do with your son?" he asked abruptly.

"He was arrested to-day—this noon. He's only sixteen. He knew no better."

"At sixteen, one is a man to-day," the colonel reminded her sharply. "What has he done? Where is he? Do I know anything of him?"

"I do not know. He was taken away."

"What for? See here, if I can help you, I will."

"Oh, thank you! I thought perhaps you might. You see, he did not realize what he was doing, and, besides, it was the lieutenant's fault—his fault entirely. Frans was serving beer on the terrace ——"

"Ah, you have a tavern, eh? Not a bad business."

"And when he was passing the lieutenant, he accidentally upset some beer on his boots. He bent down to wipe them, and the lieutenant kicked him in the mouth."

"Ah!" The colonel's hand came down heavily on the desk. "If that is so, it will be seen to. There are positive orders issued not to provoke conflict with the citizens of Brussels. In Louvain—well, that is different. Here we are thirty thousand garrison to five hundred thousand inhabitants. Set your mind at rest, madame. I will attend to it. I will see that reparation is made."

Madame Lahaye's eyes for the first time lost their intent stare and softened.

"You will see that he is set free?"

"Surely. What is the name?"

"Frans Lahaye."

The colonel started in his chair.

"So!" he said sharply. "So! You did not say so before."

"No. My husband's name was Lahaye."

"Um. A Belgian name, surely. Well, that makes it a little difficult, I'm afraid," he said slowly, moving the papers in front of him and collecting them into a neat pile.

"His name?" madame asked eagerly.

For a moment she seemed about to continue; then she closed her lips tightly and clenched her hands.

"No, his case. I did not connect the name with you at first. A very serious case. There is no more heinous offense than the resistance of a civilian to the superior orders of a component part of our military system. In striking an officer, he strikes my emperor."

"But he is a boy! He is only a boy! Won't you do your best for him?"

"I can do nothing, personally, now," the colonel replied coldly.

"But you are all powerful! You are the deputy governor!"

"That is so. The governor is not here just now, but I am answerable to him, and through him to my emperor. And, besides"—he hesitated and, bending over the desk, toyed with the pen he took up—"there were other offenses."

"What?"

"When he was brought before me, he embarked on a long speech. I compliment you, madame, on the oratorical powers of your son, but they were ill-judged. He had the bad taste to assail not only my own personal virtues, but also that of one much higher, as compared with a certain Frans Somebody who seems to have lost his head in more ways that one some centuries ago—another stubborn and insubordinate citizen of Brussels. When will they learn sense, I wonder. You know what that means, madame?"

Something in the cruel suavity of his tone, succeeding to the curt harshness that had greeted her on her entry, sent a deathlike chill through her.

"I am terribly sorry, dear lady. Well, we must see what can be done."

"Thank you, thank you! Then you will free him?"

There was a knock at the door, and the sergeant who had shown her in entered with a paper which he laid on the colonel's desk, and departed again with a curious glance at the woman who sat in the chair, bent forward, her hands clasped in entreaty.

"Yes. I will try."

He idly set the paper straight in front of him.

All at once she gave a cry. Her eyes had caught the name of "Frans" in heavy black writing on the document.

"What is that—that——" she asked with a hoarse sob.

"Tut tut! Nothing! Go now!"

The colonel could not meet her eyes. He drew out his watch and uttered a deep *"Gott!"*

"What is it?" Madame Lahaye cried anxiously. She could not keep her eyes from the document.

"Ten minutes to four—German time."

"What do you mean?" she asked wildly, rising to her feet and coming forward. "What has German time to do with my son? Where is he? What have you done with him?"

The colonel turned away. He had a twinge of compunction.

"I forgot we changed the time—I am always forgetting that," he muttered. "Sorry to tell you. Frans Lahaye was shot at a quarter to four."

Madame Lahaye stumbled. Her hand fell on the edge of the desk and gripped it tightly.

"Shot! Shot!" she repeated in a high voice.

"Yes. I am sorry. It was my duty. I could do nothing else. I wished to ——"

The mumbled excuses died on his lips as she leaned across the desk, the warrant of execution between them, her face rigid in a mask of scorn and hate, and moaned:

"Monster! You killed your own son!"

For a moment the two faces almost touched.

"Yes, your own son! Six months after I was discharged from your father's house, Frans was born. I scorned to tell him of my folly, of the moment of passion that made me give myself to you and your lies, of the blood that was in his veins. My husband, who loved me, knew it all. He adopted Frans as his son. Frans never knew, and he died Belgian—do you hear me?—Belgian!"

The deputy governor of Brussels put up his hand as if to shut out the sight of her face and of the face he seemed to see behind her shoulder—the pallid face of a boy whose large dark eyes burned with a scorn, a contempt, a hate that seared into his benumbed brain. Falling back into his chair, crumpled, bent, aged inexpressibly, he muttered:

"Go! Go!"

Turning upon him, Madame Lahaye drew herself up proudly and without a word walked to the door of that

room in which sat one who had killed his own son. At the door, she paused.

"You will send me the body of my son," she said quietly, and, without waiting for reply, she closed the door upon the deputy governor.

*Captain Schlotterwerz

By Booth Tarkington

Miss Bertha Hitzel, of Cincinnati, reached the age of twenty-two upon the eleventh of May, 1915; and it was upon the afternoon of her birthday that for the first time in her life she saw her father pace the floor. Never before had she seen any agitation of his expressed so vividly; on the contrary, until the preceding year she had seldom known him to express emotion at all, and in her youthfulness she had sometimes doubted his capacity for much feeling. She could recall no hour of family stress that had caused him to weep, to become gesticulative or to lift his voice unusually. Even at the time of her mother's death he had been quiet to the degree of apparent lethargy.

Characteristically a silent man, he was almost notorious for his silence. Everybody in Cincinnati knew old Fred Hitzel; at least there was a time when all the older business men either knew him or knew who he was. "Sleepy old Dutchman," they said of him tolerantly, meaning that he was a sleepy old German. "Funny old cuss," they said. "Never says anything he doesn't just plain haf to—but he saws wood, just the same! Put away a good many dollars before he quit the wholesale-grocery business—must be worth seven or eight hundred thousand, maybe a million. Always minded his own business, and square as a dollar. You'd think he was stingy, he's so close with his talk; but he isn't. Any good charity can get all it wants out of old Fred, and he's always right there with a subscription for any public movement. A mighty good-hearted old Dutchman he is; and a mighty

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good citizen too. Wish we had a lot more just like him!"

His daughter was his only child and they had a queer companionship. He had no children by his first wife; Bertha was by his second, whom he married when he was fifty-one; and the second Mrs. Hitzel died during the daughter's fourteenth year, just as Bertha was beginning to develop into that kind of blond charmfulness which shows forth both delicate and robust; a high-colored damsel whose color could always become instantly still higher. Her tendency was to be lively; and her father humored her sprightliness as she grew up by keeping out of the way so artfully that to her friends who came to the house he seemed to be merely a mythical propriety of Bertha's.

But father and daughter were nevertheless closely sympathetic and devoted, and the daughter found nothing indifferent to herself in his habitual seeming to be a man half asleep. He would sit all of an evening, his long upper eyelids drooping so far that only a diamond chip of lamplight reflection beneath them showed that his eyes were really open—for him—and he would puff at the cigar, protruding between his mandarin's mustache and his shovel beard, not more than twice in a quarter of an hour, yet never letting the light go out completely; and all the while he would speak not a word, though Bertha chattered gayly to him or read the newspaper aloud. Sometimes, at long intervals, he might make a faint hissing sound for comment or, when the news of the day was stirring, as at election times, he might grunt a little, not ungenially. Bertha would be pleased then to think that her reading had brought him to such a pitch of vociferation.

The change in old Fred Hitzel began to be apparent early in August, 1914; and its first symptoms surprised his daughter rather pleasantly; next, she was astonished without the pleasure; then she became troubled and increasingly apprehensive.

He came home from his German club on the afternoon when it was known that the last of the forts at Liège had

fallen and he dragged a chair to an open window, where he established himself, perspiring and breathing heavily under his fat. But Bertha came and closed the window.

"You'll catch cold, papa," she said. "Your face is all red in spots, and you better cool off with a fan before you sit in a draft. Here!" And she placed a palm-leaf fan in his hand. "You oughtn't to have walked home in the sun."

"I didn't walked," said Mr. Hitzel. "It was a trolley. You heert some noose?"

She nodded. "I bought an extra; there're plenty extras these days!"

Her father put the fan down upon his lap and rubbed his hands; he was in great spirits. "Dose big guns!" he said. "By Cheemuny, dose big guns make a hole big as a couple houses! *Badoom!* Nutting in the worlt can stop dose big guns of the Cherman Army. *Badoom!* She goes off. Efer'ting got to fall down! By Cheemuny, I would like to hear dose big guns once yet!"

Bertha gave a little cry of protest and pretended to stop her ears. "I wouldn't! I don't care to be deaf for life, thank you! I don't think you really would, either, papa." She laughed. "You didn't take an extra glass of Rhine wine down at the club, did you, papa?"

"One cless," he said. "As utsual. Alwiss one cless. Takes me one hour. Chust. Why?"

"Because"—she laughed again—"it just seemed to me I never saw you so excited."

"Excidut?"

"It must be hearing about those big German guns, I guess. Look! You're all flushed up, and don't cool off at all."

Old Fred's flush deepened, in fact; and his drooping eyelids twisted as with the effort to curtain less of his vision. "Litsen, Bairta," he said. "Putty soon, when the war gits finished, we should go to New York and hop on dat big *Vaterland* steamship and git off in Antvorp; maybe Calais. We rent us a ottomobile and go visit all dose battlevielts in Belchun; we go to Liège—all ofer—

and we look and see for ourselfs what dose fine big guns of the Cherman Army done. I want to see dose big holes. I want to see it most in the worlt. *Badoom!* Such a—such a power!"

"Well, I declare!" his daughter cried.

"What iss?"

"I declare, I don't think I ever heard you talk so much before in my whole life!"

Old Fred chuckled. "*Badoom!*" he said. "I guess dat's some talkin', ain't it? Dose big guns knows how to talk! *Badoom!* Hoopee!"

And this talkativeness of his, though coming so late in his life, proved to be not a mood but a vein. Almost every day he talked, and usually a little more than he had talked the day before—but not always with so much gusto as he had displayed concerning the great guns that reduced Liège. One afternoon he was indignant when Bertha quoted friends of hers who said that the German Army had no rightful business in Belgium.

"Eng-lish lovers!" he said. "Look at a map once, what tellss you in miles. It ain't no longer across Belchun from dat French Frontier to Chermany except about from here to Dayton. How can Chermany take such a chance once, and leaf such a place all open? Subbose dey done it: Eng-lish Army and French Army can easy walk straight to Aix and Essen, and Chermany could git her heart stab, like in two minutes! Ach-o! Cherman Army knows too much for such a foolishness. What for you want to listen to talkings from Chonny Bulls?"

"No; they weren't English lovers, papa," Bertha said. "They were Americans, just as much as I am. It was over at the Thompson girls', and there were some other people there too. They were all talking the same way, and I could hardly stand it; but I didn't know what to say."

"What to say!" he echoed. "I guess you could called 'em a pile o' Chonny Bulls, couldn't you once? Stickin' up for Queen Wictoria and turn-up pants legs because it's raining in London!"

"No," she said, thoughtful and troubled. "I don't

think they care anything particularly about the English, papa. At least, they didn't seem to."

"So? Well, what for they got to go talkin' so big on the Eng-lish site, please answer once!"

Bertha faltered. "Well, it was—most of it was about Louvain."

"Louvain! I hear you!" he said. "Listen, Bairta! Who haf you got in Chermany?"

She did not understand. "You mean what do I know about Germany?"

"No!" he answered emphatically. "You don't know nutting about Chermany. You can't speak it, efen; not so good as six years olt you could once. I mean: Who belongs to you in Chermany? I mean relations. Name of 'em is all you know: Ludwig, Gustave, Albrecht, Kurz. But your cousins chust de samie—first cousins—my own sister Minna's boys. Well, you seen her letters; you know what kind of chilten she's got. Fine boys! Our own blut—closest kin we got. Peoble same as the best finest young men here in Cincinneti. Well, Albert and Gustave and Kurz is efer' one in the Cherman Army, and Louie is *offizier,* Cherman Navy. My own nephews, ain't it? Well, we don't know where each one keeps now, yet; maybe fightin' dose Russishens; maybe marchin' into Paris; maybe some of 'em is at Louvain!

"Subbose it was Louvain—subbose Gustave or Kurz is one of dose Chermans of Louvain. You subbose one of dose boys do somet'ing wrong? No! If he hat to shoot and burn, it's because he hat to, ain't it? Well, whatefer Chermans was at Louvain, they are the same good boys as Minna's boys, ain't it? You hear Chonny Bull site of it, I tell you. You bedder wait and git your noose from Chermany, Bairta. From Chermany we git what is honest. From Chonny Bull all lies!"

But Bertha's trouble was not altogether alleviated. "People talk just dreadfully," she sighed. "Sometimes—why, sometimes you'd think, to hear them, it was almost a disgrace to be a German!"

"Keeb owt from 'em!" her father returned testily. "Quit goin' near 'em. Me? I make no attention!"

Yet as the days went by he did make some attention. The criticisms of Germany that he heard indignantly repeated at his club worried him so much that he talked about them at considerable length after he got home; and there were times, as Bertha read the *Enquirer* to him, when he would angrily bid her throw the paper away. Finally he stopped his subscription and got his news entirely from a paper printed in the German language. Nevertheless he could not choose but hear and see a great deal that displeased and irritated him. There were a few members of his club—citizens of German descent—who sometimes expressed uneasiness concerning the right of Germany to be in Belgium; others repeated what was said about town and in various editorials about the Germans; and Bertha not infrequently was so distressed by what she heard among her friends that she appealed to him for substantiation of defenses she had made.

"Why, papa, you'd think I'd said something wrong!" she told him one evening. "And sometimes I almost get to thinking that they don't like me any more. Mary Thompson said she thought I ought to be in jail, just because I said the Kaiser always tried to do whatever he thought was right."

Hitzel nodded. "Anyway, while Chermany is at war I guess we stick up for him. Kaisers I don't care; my fotter was a shtrong Kaiser hater, and so am I. Nobody hates Kaisers worse—until the big war come. I don't want no Kaisers nor Junkers—I am putty shtrong ratical, Bairta—but the Kaiser, he's right for once yet, anyhow. Subbose he didn't make no war when Chermany was attackdut; Chermany would been swallowed straight up by Cossacks and French. For once he's right, yes. You subbose the Cherman peoble let him sit in his house and say nutting while Cossacks and French chasseurs go killing peoble all ofer Chermany? If Chermany is attackdut, Kaiser's got to declare war; Kaiser's got to fight, don't he?"

"Mary Thompson said it was Germany that did the attacking, papa. She said the Kaiser——"

But her father interrupted her with a short and sour

laugh. "Fawty yearss peace," he said. "Fawty yearss peace in Europe! Cherman peoble is peaceful peoble more as any peoble—but you got to let 'em lif! Kaiser's got no more to do makin' war as anybody else in Chermany. You keep away from dose Mary Thompsons!"

But keeping away from the Mary Thompsons availed little; Bertha was not an ostrich, and if she had been one closing eyes and ears could not have kept her from the consciousness of what distressed her. The growing and intensifying disapproval of Germany was like a thickening of the very air, and the pressure of it grew heavier upon both daughter and father, so that old Hitzel began to lose flesh a little and Bertha worried about him. And when, upon the afternoon of her birthday—the eleventh of May, 1915—he actually paced the floor, she was frightened.

"But, papa, you mustn't let yourself get so excited!" she begged him. "Let's quit talking about all this killing and killing and killing. Oh, I get so tired of thinking about fighting! I want to think about this lovely wrist watch you gave me for my birthday. Come on; let's talk about that, and don't get so excited!"

"Don't git so excidut!" he mocked her bitterly. "No! Chust sit down and smoke, and trink cless Rhine wine, maybe! Who's goin' to stop eckting some excidut, I guess not, efter I litsen by Otto Schultze sit in a clob and squeal he's scairt to say how gled he is *Lusitania* got blowed up, because it would be goin' to inchur his bissnuss! He wants whole clob to eckt a hippsicrit; p'tent we don't feel no gledness about blowin' up *Lusitania!*"

"I'm not glad, papa," Bertha said. "It may be wrong, but I can't be. All those poor people in the water——"

"Chonny Bulls!" he cried. "Sittin' on a million bullets for killin' Cherman solchers! Chonny Bulls!"

"Oh, no! That's the worst of it! There were over a hundred Americans, papa."

"Americans!" he bitterly jibed. "You call dose peoble Americans? Chonny Bulls, I tell you; Chonny Bulls and Eng-lish lovers! Where was it *Lusitania* is goin' at? England! What bissnuss Americans got in Eng-land?

On a ship filt up to his neck all gunpowder and bullets to kill Chermans! Well, it seems to me if it's any American bissnuss to cuss Chermans because Chermans blow up such a murder ship I must be goin' gracy! Look here once, Bairta! Your own cousin Louie—ain't he in the Cherman Navy? He's a submarine *offizier,* I don't know. Subbose he should be, maybe he's the feller blows up *Lusitania!* You t'ink it should be Louie who does somet'ing wrong? He's a mudderer if it's him, yes? I guess not!"

"Whoever it was, of course he only obeyed orders," Bertha said gloomily.

"Well, whoefer gif him dose orders," Hitzel cried, "ain't he got right? By golly, I belief United States is all gracy except peoble descendut from Chermans. Chust litsen to 'em! Look at hetlines in noosepapers; look at bulletin boarts! A feller can't go nowhere; he can't git away from it. 'Damn Chermans!' 'Damn Chermans!' 'Damn Chermans!' You can't git away from it nowhere! 'Chermans is mudderers!' 'Chermans kills leetle bebbies!' 'Chermans kills womans!' 'Chermans coocify humenity!' Nowhere you go you git away from all such Eng-lish lies! Peoble chanche faces when they heppen to look at you, because maybe you got a Cherman-lookin' face! Bairta, I yoos to love my country, but by Gott I feel sometimes we can't stay here no longer! It's too much!"

She had begun to weep a little. "Papa, let's do talk about something else! Can't we talk about something else?"

He paid no attention, but continued to waddle up and down the room at the best pace of which he was capable. "It's too much!" he said, over and over.

The long "crisis" that followed the *Lusitania's* anguish abated Mr. Hitzel's agitations not at all; and having learned how to pace a floor he paced it more than once. He paced that floor whenever the newspapers gave evidence of one of those recurrent outbursts of American anger and disgust caused by the Germans' use of poison gas and liquid fire or by Zeppelin murders of non-com-

batants. He paced it after the Germans in Belgium killed Edith Cavell; and he paced it when the Bryce reports were published; and when the accounts of the deportations into slavery were confessed by the Germans to be true; and he paced it when the *Arabic* was torpedoed; he walked more than two hours on the day when the President's first Sussex note was published.

"Now," he demanded of Bertha, "you tell me what your Mary Thompsons says now? Mary Thompsons want Wilson to git in a war, pickin' on Chermany alwiss? You ask 'em: What your Mary Thompsons says the United States should make a war because bullet factories don't git quick-rich enough, is it? What she says?"

"I don't see her any more," Bertha told him, her sensitive color deepening. "For one thing —— Well, I guess you heard about Francis; that's Mary's brother."

Mr. Hitzel frowned. "Francis? It's the tall feller our hired girls says they alwiss hat to be letting in the front door? Sendut all so much flowers and tee-*a*-ters? Him?"

Bertha had grown pink indeed. "Yes," she said. "I don't see any of that crowd any more, papa, except just to speak to on the street sometimes; and we just barely speak, at that. I couldn't go to their houses and listen to what they said—or else they'd all stop what they had been saying whenever I came round. I couldn't stand it. Francis—Mary's brother that we just spoke of—he's gone to France, driving an ambulance. It kind of seems to me now as if probably they never, any of that crowd, did like me—not much, anyway; I guess maybe just because I was from Germans."

"Hah!" Old Fred uttered a loud and bitter exclamation. "Yes; now you see it! Ain't it so? Whoefer is from Chermans now is bat peoble, all dose Mary Thompsons says. Yoos to be comicks peoble, Chermans. Look in all olt comicks pabers—alwiss you see Chermans is jeckesses! Dummhets! Cherman fools was the choke part in funny shows! Alwiss make fun of Chermans; make fun of how Chermans speak Eng-lish lengwitch; make fun of Cherman lengwitch; make fun of Cherman

face and body; Chermans ain't got no mannerss; ain't got no sense; ain't got nutting but stomachs! Alwiss the Chermans was nutting in this country but to laugh at 'em! Why should it be, if ain't because they chust disspise us? By Gott, they say, Chermans is clowns! Clowns; it's what they yoos to call us! Now we are mudderers! It's too much, I tell you! It's too much! I am goin' to git out of the country. It's too much! It's too much! It's too much!"

"I guess you're right," Bertha said with quiet bitterness. "I never thought about it before the war, but it does look now as though they never liked anybody that was from Germans. I used to think they did—until the war; and they still do seem to like some people with German names and that take the English side. That crowd I went with, they always seemed to think the English and French side was the American side. Well, I don't care what they think."

"Look here, Bairta," said old Fred sharply. "You litsen! When Mitster Francis Thompsons gits home again from French em'ulances, you don't allow him in our house, you be careful. He don't git to come here no more, you litsen!"

"No," she said. "You needn't be afraid about that, papa. We got into an argument, and he was through coming long before he left, anyway."

"Well, he won't git no chance to argue at you when he gits beck," said her father. "I reckon we ain't in the U. S. putty soon. It's too much!"

Bertha was not troubled by his talk of departure from the country; she heard it too often to believe in it, and she told Evaline, their darky cook—who sometimes overheard things and grew nervous about her place—that this threat of Mr. Hitzel's was just letting off steam. Bertha was entirely unable to imagine her father out of Cincinnati.

But in March of 1917 he became so definite in preparation as to have two excellent new trunks sent to the house; also he placed before Bertha the results of some correspondence which he had been conducting; where-

upon Bertha, excited and distressed, went to consult her mother's cousin, Robert König, in the "office" of his prosperous "Hardware Products Corporation."

"Well, Bertha, it's like this way with me," said Mr. König. "I am for Germany when it's a case of England fighting against Germany, and I wish our country would keep out of it. But it don't look like that way now; I think we are going sure to fight Germany. And when it comes to that I ain't on no German side, you bet! My two boys, they'll enlist the first day it's declared, both of 'em; and if the United States Gover'ment wants me to go, too, I'll say 'Yes' quick. But your papa, now, it's different. After never saying anything at all for seventy-odd years, he's got started to be a talker, and he's talked pretty loud, and I wouldn't be surprised if he wouldn't know how to keep his mouth shut any more. He talks too much, these days. Of course all his talk don't amount to so much hot air, and it wouldn't ever get two cents' worth of influence, but people maybe wouldn't think about that. It might be ugly times ahead, and he could easy get into trouble. After all, I wouldn't worry, Bertha; it's nice in the wintertime to take a trip south."

"'Take a trip south!'" Bertha echoed. "Florida, yes! But Mexico—it's horrible!"

"Oh, well, not all Mexico, probably," her cousin said consolingly. "He wouldn't take you where it's in a bad condition. Where does he want to go?"

"It's a little place, he says. I never heard of it; it's called Lupos, and he's been writing to a Mr. Helmholz that keeps the hotel there and says everything's fine, he's got rooms for us; and we should come down there."

"Helmholz," Mr. König repeated. "Yes; that should be Jake Helmholz that lived here once when he was a young man; he went to Mexico. He was Hilda's nephew—your papa's first wife's nephew, Bertha."

"Yes, that's who it is, papa said."

Mr. König became reassuring. "Oh, well, then, you see, I expect you'll find everything nice then, down there, Bertha. You'll be among relatives—almost the same—if your papa's fixed it up to go and stay at a hotel Jake

Helmholz runs. I guess I shouldn't make any more objections if it's goin' to be like that, Bertha. You won't be near any revolutions, and I expect it'll be a good thing for your papa. He's too excited. Down there he can cuss Wilson as much as he pleases. Let him go and get it out of his system; he better cool off a little."

Bertha happened to remember the form of this final bit of advice a month later as she unpacked her trunk in Jacob Helmholz's hotel in Lupos; and she laughed ruefully. Lupos, physically, was no place wherein to cool off in mid-April. The squat town, seen through the square windows of her room, wavered in a white heat. Over the top of a long chalky wall she could see a mule's ears slowly ambulating in a fog of bluish dust, and she made out a great peaked hat accompanying these ears through the dust; but nothing else alive seemed to move in the Luposine world except an unseen rooster's throat which, as if wound up by the heat, sent at almost symmetrical intervals a long cock-a-doodle into the still furnace of the air; the hottest sound, Bertha thought, that she had ever heard—hotter even than the sound of August locusts in Cincinnati trees.

She found the exertion of unpacking difficult, yet did not regret that she had declined the help of a chambermaid. "I'm sure she's an Indian!" she explained to her father. "It scared me just to look at her, and I wouldn't be able to stand an Indian waiting on me—never!"

He laughed and told her she must get used to the customs of the place. "Besites," he said, "it ain't so much we might see a couple Injuns around the house, maybe; it don't interfere, not so's a person got to notice. What makes me notice, it's how Jake Helmholz has got putty near a Cherman hotel out here so fur away. It beats efer't'ing! Pilsner on ice! From an ice plant like a little steamship's got. Cherman mottas down-stairs on walls: *Wer liebt nicht Wein, Weib und* —— He's got a lot of 'em! He fixes us efening dinner in a putty garden he's got. It's maybe hot now, but bineby she coolss off fine. Jake, he says we'd be supp'iced; got to sleep under blankets after dark, she cools off so fine!"

Old Fred was more cheerful than his daughter had known him to be for a long, long time; and though her timid heart was oppressed by the strange place and by strange thoughts concerning it, she felt a moment's gladness that they had come.

"Jake Helmholz is a cholly feller," Mr. Hitzel went on, chuckling. "He gits along good down here. Says Villa ain't nefer come in hundert and finfty miles. He ain't afrait of Villa, besites. He seen him once; he shook hants nice, he said. Dinnertime, Jake Helmholz he's got a fine supp'ice to show us, he says."

"You mean something he's having cooked for us for dinner as a surprise, papa?"

"No; he gits us a Cherman dinner, he says; but it ain't a supp'ice to eat. He says 'You chust wait,' he says to me. 'You'll git a supp'ice for dinner. It's goin' to be the supp'ice of your life,' he says; 'but it ain't nutting to eat,' he says. 'It's goin' to be a supp'ice for Miss Bairta, too,' Jake says. 'She'll like it nice, too,' he says."

But Bertha did not care for surprises; she looked anxious. "I wish he wouldn't have a surprise for us," she said. "I'm afraid of finding one every minute anyhow, in the wash-bowl or somewhere. I know I'll go crazy the first time I see a tarantula!"

"Oh, it ain't goin' to be no bug," her father assured her. "Jake says it's too fine a climate for much bugs; he ain't nefer worry none about bugs. He says it's a supp'ice we like so much it tickles us putty near dead!"

Bertha frowned involuntarily, wishing that her father had not used the word dead just then; she felt Mexico ominous round her, and even that intermittent cockcrow failed to reassure her as a homely and familiar sound. Mexico itself was surprising enough for her; even the appearance of her semi-relative, the landlord Helmholz, had been a surprise to her, and she wished that he had not prepared anything additional. Her definite fear was that his idea might prove to be something barbaric and improper in the way of native dances; and she had a bad afternoon, not needing to go outside of her room to find it. But a little while after the sharp sunset the husk-

colored chambermaid brought in a lamp, and Mr. Hitzel followed, shouting wheezily. He had discovered the surprise.

"Hoopee!" he cried. "Come look! Bairta, come down! It's here! Come down, see who!" He seized her wrist, hauling her with him, Bertha timorous and reluctant. "Come look! It's here, settin' at our dinner table; it's all fixed in the garten waitin'. Hoopee! Hoopee!"

And having thus partly urged and partly led her down the stairs he halted her in the trellised entrance of Mr. Helmholz's incongruous garden, a walled inclosure with a roof of black night. Half a dozen oil lamps left indeterminate yet definitely unfamiliar the shapings of foliage, scrawled in gargoyle shadows against the patched stucco walls; but one of the lamps stood upon a small table which had been set for three people to dine, and the light twinkled there reassuringly enough upon commonplace metal and china, and glossed amber streaks brightly up and down slender long bottles. It made too—not quite so reassuringly—a Rembrandt sketch of the two men who stood waiting there—little, ragged-faced, burnt-dry Helmholz, and a biggish young man in brown linen clothes with a sturdy figure under them. His face was large, yet made of shining and ruddy features rather small than large; he was ample yet compact; bulkily yet tightly muscular everywhere, suggesting nothing whatever of grace, nevertheless leaving to a stranger's first glance no possibility to doubt his capacity for immense activity and resistance. Most of all he produced an impression of the stiffest sort of thickness; thickness seemed to be profoundly his great power. This strong young man was Mr. Helmholz's surprise for Bertha and her father.

The latter could not get over it. "Supp'ice!" he cried, laughing loudly in his great pleasure. "'I got a supp'ice for you and Miss Bairta,' he tells me. 'Comes efening dinnertime you git a supp'ice,' Jake says. Look, Bairta, what for a supp'ice he makes us! You nefer seen him before. Guess who it is. It's Louie!"

"Louie?" she repeated vacantly.

"Louie Schlotterwerz!" her father shouted. "Your own cousin! Minna's Ludwig! Y'efer see such a fine young feller? It's Louie!"

Vociferating, he pulled her forward; but the new cousin met them half-way and kissed Bertha's hand with an abrupt gallantry altogether matter-of-fact with him, but obviously confusing to Bertha. She found nothing better to do than to stare at her hand, thus saluted, and to put it behind her immediately after its release, whereupon there was more hilarity from her father.

"Look!" he cried. "She don't know what to do! She don't seen such manners from young fellers in Cincinneti; I should took her to Chermany long ago. Sit down! Sit down! We eat some, drink cless Rhine wine and git acquainted."

"Yes," said Helmholz. "Eat good. You'll find there's worse places than Mexico to come for German dishes; it'll surprise you. Canned United States soup you git, maybe, but afterworts is *Wiener Schnitzel* and all else German. And if you got obyeckshuns to the way my waiters look out for you, why, chust hit 'em in the nose once, and send for me!"

He departed as the husk-colored servitress and another like her set soup before his guests. Schlotterwerz had not yet spoken distinguishably, though he had murmured over Bertha's hand and laughed heartily with his uncle. But his expression was amiable, and Bertha after glancing at him timidly began: "Do you ——" Then blushing even more than before she turned to her father. "Does he—does Cousin Ludwig speak English?"

Mr. Hitzel's high good humor increased all the time, and having bestowed upon his nephew a buffet of approval across the little table—"Speak Eng-lish?" he exclaimed. "Speaks it as good as me and you! He was four years in Eng-land, different times. Speaks English, French, Mexican—Spanish, you call it, I guess—I heert him speak it to Jakie Helmholz. Speaks all leng-witches. Cherman, Louie speaks it too fest."

Schlotterwerz laughed. "I'm afraid Uncle Fritz is

rather vain, Cousin Bertha," he said; and she was astonished to hear no detectable accent in his speech, though she said afterward that his English reminded her more of a Boston professor who had been one of her teachers in school than of anything else she could think of. "Your papa and I had a little talk before dinner, in German," Schlotterwerz went on. "At least, we attempted it. Your papa had to stop frequently to think of words he had forgotten, and sometimes he found it necessary to ask me the meaning of an idiom which I introduced into our conversation. He assured me that you spoke German with difficulty, Cousin Bertha; but, if you permit me to say it, I think he finds himself more comfortable in the English tongue."

Mr. Hitzel chuckled, not abashed; then he groaned. "No, I ain't! A feller can't remember half what his olt lengwitch is; yet all the same time he like to speak it, and maybe he gits so's he can't speak neither one if he don't look out! Feller can hear plenty Cherman in Cincinneti." His expression clouded with a reminiscence of pain. "Well, I tell you, Louie, I am gled to git away from there. I couldn't stood the U. S. no longer. It's too much! I couldn't swaller it no longer!"

"I should think not," Louie agreed sympathetically. "Many others are like you, Uncle Fritz; they're crossing the frontier every day. That's part of my business here, as I mentioned."

Old Fred nodded. "Louie tellss me he comes here about copper mines," he said to Bertha; "for after-the-war bissnuss. Cherman gufment takes him off the navy a while once, and he's come also to see if Chermans from the U. S. which comes in Mexico could git back home to fight for the olt country. Louie's got plenty on his hants. You can see he's a smart feller, Bairta!"

"Yes, papa," she said meekly; but her cousin laughed and changed the subject.

"How are things in your part of the States?" he asked. "Pretty bad?"

"So tough I couldn't stood 'em, ain't I tolt you?" Mr. Hitzel responded with sudden vehemence. "It's too

much! I tell you I hat to hate to walk on the streets my own city! I tell you, the United States iss Eng-lish lovers! I don't want to go back in the U. S. long as I am a lifin' man! The U. S. hates you if you are from Chermans. Yes, it's so! If the U. S. is goin' to hate me because I am from Chermans, well, by Gott, I can hate the U. S.!"

Bertha interposed: "Oh, no! Papa, you mustn't say that."

The old man set down the wine-glass he was tremulously lifting to his lips and turned to her. "Why? Why I shouldn't say it? Look once: Why did the U. S. commence from the beginning pickin' on Chermany? And now why is it war against Chermany? Ammunitions! So Wall Street don't git soaked for Eng-lish bonds! So bullet makers keep on gittin' quick-rich. Why don't I hate the U. S. because it kills million Chermans from U. S. bullets, when it was against the law all time to send bullets for the Eng-lish to kill Chermans? Ain't it so, Louie?"

But the young man shook his head. He seemed a little amused by his uncle's violent earnestness, and probably he was amused too by the old fellow's interpretation of international law. "No, Uncle Fritz," he said. "I think we may admit—between ourselves at least, and in Mexico—we may admit that the Yankees can hardly be blamed for selling munitions to anybody who can buy them."

Mr. Hitzel sat dumfounded. "You don't blame 'em?" he cried. "You are Cherman *offizier*, and you don't ——"

"Not at all," said Schlotterwerz. "It's what we should do ourselves under the same circumstances. We always have done so, in fact. Of course we take the opposite point of view diplomatically, but we have no real quarrel with the States upon the matter of munitions. All that is propaganda for the proletariat." He laughed indulgently. "The proletariat takes enormous meals of propaganda; supplying the fodder is a great and expensive industry!"

Mr. Hitzel's expression was that of a person altogether nonplused; he stared at this cool nephew of his, and said nothing. But Bertha had begun to feel less embarrassed than she had been at first, and she spoke with some assurance.

"What a beautiful thing it would be if nobody at all made bullets," she said. "If there wasn't any ammunition—why, then ——"

"Why, then," said the foreign cousin, smiling, "we should again have to fight with clubs and axes."

"Oh, no!" she said quickly. "I mean if there wouldn't be any fighting at all."

He interrupted her, laughing. "When is that state of the universe to arrive?"

"Oh, it could!" she protested earnestly. "The people don't really want to fight each other."

"No; that is so, perhaps," he assented.

"Well, then, why couldn't it happen that there wouldn't ever be any more fighting?"

"Because," said Schlotterwerz, "because though peoples might not fight, nations always will. Peoples must be kept nations, for one reason, so that they will fight."

"Oh!" Bertha cried.

"Yes!" said her cousin emphatically; he had grown serious. "If war dies, progress dies. War is the health of nations."

"You mean war is good?" Bertha said incredulously.

"War is the best good!"

"You mean war when you have to fight to defend your country?"

"I mean war."

She looked at him with wide eyes that comprehended only the simplest matters and comprehended the simplest with the most literal simplicity.

"But the corpses," she said faintly. "Is it good for them?"

"What?" said her cousin, staring now in turn.

Bertha answered him. "War is killing people. Well, if you knew where the spirits went—the spirits that were

in the corpses that get killed—if you knew for certain that they all went to heaven, and war would only be sending them to a good place—why, then perhaps you could say war is good. You can't say it till you are certain that it is good for all the corpses."

"Colossal!" the young officer exclaimed, vaguely annoyed. "Really, I don't know what you're talking about. I'm afraid it sounds like some nonsense you caught from Yankeedollarland. We must forget all that now, when you are going to be a good German. Myself, I speak of humanity. War is necessary for the progress of humanity. There can be no advance for humanity unless the most advanced nation leads it. To lead it the most advanced nation must conquer the others. To conquer them it must make war."

"But the Germans!" Bertha cried. "The Germans say they are the most advanced, but they claim they didn't make the war. Papa had letters and letters from Germany, and they all said they were attacked. That's what so much talk was about at home in Cincinnati. Up to the *Lusitania* the biggest question of all was about which side made the war."

"They all made it," said Schlotterwerz. "War was inevitable, and that nation was the cleverest which chose its own time for it and struck first."

Bertha was dismayed. "But we always—always ——" She faltered. "We claimed that the war was forced on Germany by the English."

"It was inevitable," her cousin repeated. "It was coming. Those who did not know it were stupid. War is always going to come; and the most advanced nation will always be prepared for it. By such means it will first conquer, then rule all the others. Already we are preparing for the next war. Indeed, we are fighting this one, I may say, with a view to the next, and the peace we make will really be what one now calls 'jockeying for position' for the next war.

"Let us put aside all this talk of 'Who began the war,' and accusations and defenses in journalism and oratory; all this nonsense about international law, which doesn't

exist, and all the absurdities about mercy. Nature has no mercy; neither has the upward striving in man. Let us speak like adult people, frankly. We are three blood relations, in perfect sympathy. You have fled from the cowardly hypocrisy of the Yankees, and I am a German officer. Let us look only at the truth. What do we see? That life is war and war is the glory of life, and peace is part of war. In peace we work. It is work behind the lines, and though the guns may be quiet for the time, our frontiers are always our front lines. Look at the network of railways we had built in peace up to the Belgian frontier. We were ready, you see. That is why we are winning. We shall be ready again and win again when the time comes, and again after that. The glorious future belongs all to Germany."

Bertha had not much more than touched the food before her, though she had been hungry when they sat down; and now she stopped eating altogether, letting her hands drop into her lap; where they did not rest, however, for her fingers were clutched and unclutched nervously as she listened. Her father continued to eat, but not heartily; he drank more than he ate; he said nothing; and during moments of silence his heavy breathing became audible. The young German was unaware that his talk produced any change in the emotional condition of his new-found relatives; he talked on, eating almost vastly, himself, but drinking temperately.

He abandoned the great subject for a time, and told them of his mother and brothers, all in war work except Gustave, who, as the Hitzels knew, had been killed at the Somme. Finally, when Cousin Louie had eaten as much as he could he lit a cigar taken from an embroidered silk case which he carried, and offered one to his uncle. Old Fred did not lift his eyes; he shook his head and fumbled in one of his waistcoat pockets.

"No," he said in a husky voice. "I smoke my own I brought from Cincinneti."

"As you like," Schlotterwerz returned. "Mine come from Havana." He laughed and added, "By secret express!"

"You ain't tell us," Mr. Hitzel said, his voice still husky—"you ain't tell us yet how long you been in Mexico."

"About fourteen months, looking out for the commercial future and doing my share to make the border interesting at the present time for those Yankees you hate so properly, Uncle Fritz."

Hitzel seemed to ruminate feebly. "You know," he said, "you know I didn't heert from Minna since Feb'wary; she ain't wrote me a letter. Say once, how do the Cherman people feel toward us that is from Chermans in the U. S.—the Cherman-Americans."

His nephew grunted. "What would you expect?" he inquired. "You, of course, are exempt; you have left the country in disgust, because you are a true German. But the people at home will never forgive the German-Americans. It is felt that they could have kept America out of this war if they had been really loyal. It was expected of them; but they were cowardly, and they will lose by it when the test comes."

"Test?" old Fred repeated vacantly.

The nephew made a slight gesture with his right hand, to aid him in expressing the obviousness of what he said. "Call it the German test of the Monroe Doctrine. Freedom of the seas will give Germany control of the seas, of course. The Panama Canal will be internationalized, and the States will be weakened by their approaching war with Japan, which is inevitable. Then will come the test of the Monroe Doctrine! We have often approached it, but it will be a much better time when England is out of the way and the States have been exhausted by war with Japan."

Bertha interposed: "Would England want to help the United States?"

"Not out of generosity," Schlotterwerz laughed. "For her own interest—Canada." He became jocularly condescending and employed a phrase which Bertha vaguely felt to be somewhat cumbersome and unnatural. "My fair cousin," he said, "listen to some truth, my fair cousin. No nation ever acts with generosity. Every

government encourages the proletariat to claim such virtues, but it has never been done and never will be done. See what the Yankees are claiming: They go to war 'to make the world safe for democracy.' One must laugh! They enter the war not for democracy; not to save France nor to save England; not to save international law! Neither is it to save Wall Street millionaires—though all that is excellent for the proletariat and brings splendid results. No, my fair cousin, the Yankees never did anything generous in their whole history; it isn't in the blood. You are right to hate them, because they are selfish not from a glorious policy, like the great among the Germans, but out of the meanness of their crawling hearts. They went to war with us because they were afraid for their own precious skins, later!"

"I don't believe it!"

Bertha's voice was suddenly sharp and loud, and the timid blushes had gone from her cheeks. She was pale, but brighter-eyed than her father had ever seen her—brighter-eyed than anybody had ever seen her. "I don't believe it! We went to war because all that you've been saying has to be fought till it's out of the world; I just now understand. Oh!" she cried, "I just now understand why our American boys went to drive the ambulances in France, but not in Germany!"

Captain Schlotterwerz sat amazed, staring at her in an astonishment too great to permit his taking the cigar from his mouth for better enunciation. "We," he echoed. "Now she says 'we'!" His gaze moved to her father. "She is a Yankee, she means. You hear what she says?"

"Yes, I heert her," said his uncle thickly.

"Well, what——"

Old Fred Hitzel rose to his feet and with a shaking hand pointed in what he believed to be the direction of the Atlantic Ocean.

"What you subbose, you flubdubber?" he shouted. "Git back to Chermany! Git back to Chermany if you got any way to take you! Git back and try some more how long you can fool the Cherman people till you git 'em

to heng you up to a lemp post! To-morrow me and Bairta starts home again for our own country. It's Cincinneti, you bet you! We heert you! It's too much! It's too much! It's too much!"

*The Feminine Touch

By George Weston

I

Sometimes I am asked—the words may differ but the sense is the same: "Doctor, what is the strangest thing you saw at the Front—the one thing that would live in your memory even if you were to forget everything else?"

It is evident that some of my questioners expect a cross section of battle, full of fire, fury and pathological detail; while many, I think, would like to hear a story that appeals to the heart; or possibly something supernatural—another vision of the Angel of Mons, another reappearance of departed heroes. And still there are some who seem to hope for something bizarre, with a strident laugh at the end like a machine gun suddenly heard from ambush.

As a matter of fact it happens that the strangest thing I saw at the Front had an element of nearly all these qualities in it. And because though the story finds its climax on a battle-field in France it had its start upon an American transport, I will begin with telling you of my first meeting with Little Nell.

It was on the third morning out from New York that I first saw him, and the moment he crossed my line of vision I began to have my doubts.

"Hello," I said, watching him closely as he walked along the deck. "What have we here? Is it Little Nell the Stowaway?"

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Our steamer was a French liner, one of a convoy on its way to France, and I was talking at the time to the ship's physician, old Doctor Diderot of the warm heart and excitable tongue.

"Leetle Nell the Stowaway—what you mean, *mon ami?*" he breathlessly inquired, following the direction of my glance. "You t'ink we have a German spy in the meedle of us? *Que diable!*" he suddenly muttered, twizzling his grizzled imperial and looking more than ever like D'Artagnan in his later years. "I see now what you mean!"

By that time we were both looking at the figure that had caught my eye, and the longer we gazed the more assuredly I nodded my head, and the more vigorously Doctor Diderot preened his facial adornments, meanwhile exclaiming under his breath: "Name of a name of a name!"

It was of course a girl masquerading in national-army uniform that we were watching. Neither of us, I can tell you, had the least doubt of that. I am not so old as I shall be some day, but first and last I have seen on the stage quite a number of young ladies dressed to impersonate men, but never yet have I seen one who could deceive the good physician. Not only are the lines of anatomy immutable, even when disguised in a loosely fitting coat and peg-top trousers—but the walk, the attitudes, the unconscious mannerisms, the glance of the eye—all these betray the impersonator, especially when she tries to swagger or puffs at a cigarette as this young quasi soldier did, holding it awkwardly between thumb and finger and blowing out the smoke in a series of quick little puffs.

"*Que diable!*" repeated Doctor Diderot, the light of romance casting its glow over his handsome old face. "What you t'ink of it, eh? Perhaps her brother has fallen on the field of honor and she goes to avenge him. . . . Or her sweetheart is among the *grands blessés,* and because she cannot join the Red Cross she adopts such a ruse to go nurse him. *Jarni bleu, mon ami!*" he joyfully added, delicately touching his lips with

his finger tips, "upon the altar of such a bravery I lay the tribute of my profoundest admiration."

With a gesture in which I know I saw nothing ridiculous at the time, he laid his kiss on the passing breeze, and then we both stood silent watching the subject of our remarks.

The graceful figure had stopped and was leaning over the rail, palm pressed tightly against the cheeks—an attitude that might have pleased a painter of pretty figures, but that would never have found favor in the eyes of a drill sergeant.

"You see?" continued Doctor Diderot, his excitement only equaled by his satisfaction. "She dreams. It is even better than I had thought. You know what I have often told my friends, m'sieur? 'You wait,' I tell them. 'This is a war of miracles, and the end, she is not yet. In the last grand crisis of French history it was Charlotte Corday who appeared, calm and tranquil like a moonbeam, and when she met the unspeakable Marat all the world at once became a nobler place to live. And in the next grand crisis before that who was it but Joan of Arc who came with a note like golden trumpets, and even the poor cold dead arise, warm with anger and rich with strength, to preserve for us inviolate the spirit of France. You wait,' I tell my friends. 'Some day the woman's hand may appear again like a thunderbolt and deal the grand decisive blow!' And now—who knows, m'sieur?—it may be a woman from your own wonderful country who will place my name among the prophets! It may be that even now ——" His voice suddenly dropped to a quieter pitch. "*Voyez!*" he said behind his hand, "I think she comes our way!"

At the entrance to the ship's hospital the approaching figure stopped and looked first at me and then at Doctor Diderot.

"Pardon me," said a gentle voice.

"Certainly! Certainly, *mon brave!*" bowed Doctor Diderot, his hand upon his heart, evidently warmed through and through by the adventure. The newcomer also bowed, and then they bowed together, a pleasant

little comedy of manners, and yet beneath and through it all I seemed to catch, even then, a glance of greater things to come.

"Pardon me," said the gentle voice, "but is either of you gentlemen the doctor?"

Looking back at it now I should say that old Doctor Diderot and myself were probably the two biggest fools on the Atlantic Ocean that day, but not knowing it then we both bowed in a sort of gallant unison.

"I have a tooth that is aching dreadfully," continued our visitor. "Do you think you could extract it for me? Would it be putting you to too much trouble?"

Almost before I can tell it Doctor Diderot had his patient in a chair by the side of his desk, and looking down at the curling eyelashes and slightly quivering lip I could have sworn to my suspicions.

"Now," said my gallant old colleague, turning from a cabinet and unconsciously tuning his voice for a lady's ear, "if you will be so kind as to show me, please, this naughty tooth. . . . Ah, yes. . . . Of course. . . . Now first I will try him—oh, so gentle!—to see if he is loose. . . . And then ——"

There was a twist of the wrist, and the next moment the offending tooth was being held in front of the patient's eyes.

"*Regardez!*" laughed Doctor Diderot, his handsome old face alight with satisfaction. "So loose it was I could have coaxed it out with a few kind words, but —— *Que diable, mon ami!*" he interrupted himself, turning to me. "We guess' it right, you see!"

For the patient, who in the last few seconds had turned as white as the proverbial sheet, had suddenly given one desperate gasp—and had fainted.

When I was considerably younger than I am now—a boy in short trousers living in those almost incredible years before there were any automobiles or moving pictures—I occasionally saw a magic-lantern show, the chief miracle of which would be a set of dissolving views in which one picture would slowly fade away upon the screen while another was as slowly taking its place. I am

reminded of this by the change that took place in Doctor Diderot's patient when he fainted.

A minute before, and we were convinced that he was a girl in disguise—a girl with a golden complexion and delicate wistful features; but when the pallor of unconsciousness drew the color from his cheeks we could see the downy but unmistakable shadow of a young mustache and beard slowly appear upon his face. I was still staring at this phenomenon and wondering whether Doctor Diderot had the joke on me or whether I had it on him when the door opened and an auburn-haired sergeant entered.

"Oh, he's here, is he?" demanded this latter visitor. "Cripes, he's had me running all over the ship after him! What's the matter?" he asked with a sheepish grin. "Did he faint away when you pulled it?"

"Keeled right over," I nodded. "Great stunt for a soldier. Is he in your company?"

"Yep; and I promised his mother I'd look after him; that's the woist of it. Sure he's all right?"

"Will be in a few minutes," I nodded again.

"I'd better beat it then. I'm trying to put some ginger in the kid, and I wouldn't want him to know that I saw him like this. I used to work for his mother—see?—and she made me promise to keep an eye on the kid"—up to this point his tone had been almost belligerent, but now it culminated in a rich burst of despair—"though God knows what I'm going to do with him when we get to the Front!"

He disappeared and a few minutes later our patient slowly followed him, looking more than ever like a girl in masquerade, though still groggy from his late unconsciousness and mixing his words a little as he bade us a polite good-bye.

"Well, what do you think?" I asked Doctor Diderot, working fast to beat him to it as soon as we were alone again.

"Well do I think?" he repeated in a thoughtful voice. "A beeg, beeg question, my friend, and yet of a kind with which I have often warm' the heart and expand' the

mind on a tedious voyage. Now you, yourself, have you ever been in the workshop of Rodin—Rodin the sculptor, who died the other day?"

It was what the orators call a rhetorical question, so I only shook my head.

"It was a long time ago that I call' there with a friend," he continued, "in the days when I too dreamed of being a great man—another Pasteur, if you like—with a grand combination of vaccine for every disease which is! Once a year, it is thus that I dreamed it, all the world would be vaccinate' with Diderot's Famous Formula. But *la, la, la!*—I start' to tell you of Rodin. It was just before he was discovered to be a genius that I called—and all round his workshop were beautiful busts and conventional figures which he had made—such as you see, perhaps, in any sculptor's workshop—in any good museum.

"But in a corner behind a curtain was a figure on which the master was working—a what you call a freak; yes? Beautiful? A thousand times, no! Classical? It is to laugh! It was, if you like, an experiment in the dark—the child of a crazy whim—a lunacy, judged by all that had gone before. But ah, *mon ami,* when at last it was finished it became La Penseur—a miracle in stone—a masterpiece in statuary for every race and age—and all the world hailed Rodin as one who had walked with the gods.

"And so, my friend, you see the point I make to you as clearly as I dare? Classical studies in human beings—conventional figures—they are made by proxy for all that we know. You look—*mon Dieu!*—and soon you yawn to see so much that is always the same. But if in a corner of the workshop you suddenly come to what you might call a freak—yes?—the child, perhaps, of a whim divine—I charge you, *mon ami,* walk soft and keep silent. It may be that Someone watches the result of his experiment, and perhaps he would not like to hear you laugh."

II

I was leaning over the rail that night, thinking of this

and that, when I heard a light step approaching, and almost before I turned I knew who it was.

"Good-evening, doctor," he said in his gentle voice. "I want to thank you for your kindness and courtesy in helping to pull my tooth this morning. My name is Leighton—Neil Leighton."

He paused expectantly, full of his pretty manners; and, grumbling a little, I fear, I gave him my name.

"Oh, thank you, doctor," he said. "I was afraid you'd think I had no manners at all—the way I stalked off this morning just as soon as my tooth was extracted. But, do you know, I felt awfully thick and dopey. Else of course I wouldn't have been so rude."

The moon was nearly full and under its radiance his face looked even more feminine than it had looked in the morning—feminine and refined and yet with such a wistful expression that it wasn't far from being tragic.

"If there's one thing I simply can't bear," he continued, "it's rudeness. Honestly and truly, it positively makes me shudder to be in the society of rude people." He came a little nearer and gently placed his hand on my arm in his appealing way. "Do you know, doctor," he said, "there are some terribly rude persons among the soldiers on this ship, but when I think of where they are going, and why they are going, and what they are going to do when they get there—well, do you know, I can quite forgive them for it."

"That's right," I nodded; "when you look at it that way ——"

He had come close to the rail and now he hummed an air as he looked out over the waters.

"That's from La Gioconda—the ballet, you know," he told me. "Do you like the opera, doctor? . . . So do I. I think it's wonderful! And the dancing? . . . Wonderful! Oh, wonderful! You know, I nearly took up dancing once, but mother didn't approve. So I kept to millinery; that's mother's business, you know—Eloise, Incorporated, Fifth Avenue—and mother herself would tell you how successful my work has been. It's like everything else, I guess—a sort of a gift. This after-

noon, for instance, it came to me like a flash: A bonnet made like an aviator's cap and a plume on each side—to represent the wings, you know. Don't you think it would be cute?"

"Well—the way you describe it ——" I hesitated.

"Mother says I inherited it from her," he nodded. "So perhaps I inherited the stage from father. He was an actor—John Leighton—of course you've heard of him. Mother says that all the girls in New York were simply crazy over him—but she won him. Of course I can't remember—he died soon after I was born—but we have a large oil painting of him, and I think he's quite the handsomest man that ever lived. Don't you think it's awfully nice to have some one in your life like that—some one whom you can look up to and idolize?"

He was still looking over the sea, wistful, sad, and yet somehow still full of his pretty manners—reminding me now of a little bisque ornament that once adorned my grandmother's mantel-shelf—a little bisque figure of a courtier with a plum-colored coat and long silk stockings—a graceful little figure whose perpetual bow went perpetually unheeded, and who always looked lonely and friendless in that austere room in his station between the brass candlestick and the two stuffed squirrels under the glass bell.

"You know, I shall never be like that," said Neil. "I shall never have any one to look up to and idolize me. Of course the girls at the store like me, and all that. A lot of them have known me ever since I was a little bit of a thing. But when they think I'm out of hearing they sometimes say the awfulest things—not about my work, you know, but about me personally, if you know what I mean. Now, you know, doctor, a man doesn't like that. A man doesn't like to be treated like a girl, and have little dolls sent him on his birthday, and all that sort of thing. A joke's a joke of course, all the world over, but a man doesn't like a thing like that, especially when it's going on all the time."

"No," I acknowledged, "it must be rather annoying."

"Oh, it is, doctor! It is! So with one thing and

another I finally said to myself when one of our delivery men enlisted and was given a lovely send-off—I finally said to myself: 'I know what I'll do. I'll show them the sort of a man I am! I'll just go right straight out and enlist too!' Of course I could have gone as an interpreter, because mother had me learn French and German so I could follow the Continental fashions. But I just wouldn't go as an interpreter. I finally said to them: 'No, gentlemen, I'm going as a soldier or I'm not going at all.' And when they saw how dreadfully firm I was they let me have my way."

At that, perhaps because he gave me such an appealing look, I gruffly patted him on the back.

"Thank you, doctor," he said, holding himself more than upright. "I've always felt the way the poet felt, you know—'A man's a man for a' that.' Well, I must turn in now. You don't know how much better I feel now I've had this little talk with you. Good-night, doctor."

"Good-night."

But still he paused, humming another air. "Mm-m-m-m-mm. . . . That's where the bogy man comes in—La Gioconda, you know. Mm-m-m-m-mm. Wonderful! Oh, wonderful! . . . Well, good-night again, doctor. I'm awfully glad I've met you."

III

As it happened I didn't see much of Neil again until we landed and took up our quarters in Neufchâtel. At the north end of the town near the river was an old château, which had evidently once stood proudly enough in the center of its own grounds. But as the city had grown new streets and rows of houses had been thrown out to the north like a slowly encroaching tide, and now the château, with a church across the street, was almost entirely surrounded by tiles and chimney pots, and had reached that stage of general seediness which is best described as shabby genteel.

It was in this house that we established one of our temporary hospital quarters, taking the lower floor for cots

and supplies. As I needed an assistant who could speak French as well as English I put in a request that Neil should be assigned as my orderly—a request that was O. K.'d with an obvious relief that wasn't exactly complimentary to my choice.

"Oh, doctor," he said, full of his pretty manners as soon as he saw me, "if you only knew what a relief this is!"

"Seems to be a relief to some of your officers too," I said without looking up from the instruments I was unpacking.

"I know," he said at last in a low voice. "And the worst of it is I'm afraid they're right about it too. I used to think I'd get over it, but the way I've felt these last few days I don't believe I ever, ever shall. It's just as mother says: It seems to be something that was born with me, and I guess it would need a knife to cut it out."

Which wasn't far from the way I had sized it up myself. "That's all right, too, my boy," I thought with a grim satisfaction. "By the time you've helped your Uncle Dudley for a month or two you'll think you've been trimmed with an ax." It was just at this point, I remember, that the door opened and a visitor quietly entered.

At first I thought she was a child, which was partly due to the subdued light that filtered in through the leaded windows; but the next moment I thought she was a woman, which was partly due again to her look of quiet sadness. As she came nearer, however, I guessed that she was about seventeen—a slight yet graceful little figure, but with that sorrowful look when her face was in repose which I had already noted as characteristic of many of the children in that part of France.

Now my French is something like a beginner's shorthand. If the delivery is slow and the words are simple I can "take it down" in my mind with the best of them, but if the delivery begins to come too fast or the words are unusual I straightway run behind, snatching at a phrase here and there, but altogether lost so far as the gist of the matter is concerned. For this reason I was

glad that Neil was present, because the girl hadn't spoken ten words when I found myself floundering.

"Have the honor"—I caught that all right. And "America"—I doubt if America could get by me in any language. But after the girl had stopped, facing Neil and me and evidently waiting for an answer, I was about to offer a regretful "*Je ne comprends pas,*" when Neil first bowed to me, then at the girl, and trippingly made reply.

From a word or two that I gathered here and there I judged it to be a pretty thing in its way—a deduction that was confirmed by the deepening look of satisfaction in the girl's eyes and the smile that slowly came to her face when Neil finished at last with another bow, his right foot advanced, his hand upon his heart, and reminding me more than ever of that young bisque courtier that used to stand upon my grandmother's mantelshelf.

They talked together then, backward and forward, for a few minutes, and as I watched Neil with his pretty airs and graces I couldn't help thinking how well he harmonized with the scene. The old château, the high leaded windows, the quick musical speech—he seemed to fit them all as though they had been made to order for him long ago and had been waiting all these years for him to call. And when I looked at the girl standing there watching him with grave yet friendly eyes and answering him back from time to time—a gracious little figure, for all her sadness—I could almost have thought that Neil's wistful smile had been meant for her, too, the same as strange parts made in distant workshops often meet in a common assembly room and mesh together in a perfect contact of years.

"This is the young lady who owns the place," said Neil, turning to me and rapidly explaining. "The Germans got the rest of the family in their summer cottage in the Vosges, way back when the war started, but they didn't get her because she was going to convent yet—near Paris. She just dropped in to make us feel welcome, she says, and to see if there's anything she can do for us."

" She isn't living here all alone, is she? " I cried.

" No; she's got her aunt with her. She said she turned the house over to the Americans on the one condition that she and her aunt could keep their apartment up-stairs in the south wing. I shouldn't be surprised if this was the old lady coming."

A heavy step had been sounding along the corridor and now a grim-visaged Frenchwoman entered and stared at the scene with eyes that missed nothing.

" Aunt Celeste! " announced the girl, and while I was bowing, uncomfortably enough, my back and neck feeling stiff and intractable, from the corner of my eye I caught sight of Neil bent over in charming salutation, and a feeling swept over me which wasn't far from downright jealousy.

" Never mind," I thought. " They'll find him out soon enough."

It happened almost as quickly as I thought it. Neil and the girl were chatting away, and Aunt Celeste was standing by me watching and listening to them.

" I like your yo'ng friend," she confided to me, smiling at something he said. It was just at that moment that the shell burst, falling out of a clear sky from the firing line nearly ten miles away and digging a deep hole for itself in the roadway between the château and the church across the street. It was the first shell that had ever visited Neufchâtel, and it certainly made an impression in more ways than one.

The conversation between Neil and the girl suddenly stopped; that was to be expected. But instead of Neil's taking the girl under his wing, it was she, I soon perceived, who had to mother him. At first I thought he was going altogether to pieces, as when Doctor Diderot had pulled his tooth, but presently his pallor began to leave him, though he still kept his hand pressed tightly against his side.

"Ah, flûte!" said Aunt Celeste, frowning. "A nice yo'ng man, but I think he would make a good nurse. He has—what you call it?—the feminine touch, is it not? " And shrugging her shoulders she called across the room

in her deep voice: "Rose-Marie! I think it is time that we went, if you please."

From what I have told you you might expect that when Aunt Celeste turned her face against Neil it would have given me a certain amount of satisfaction.

But somehow it didn't.

For one thing it raised, perhaps unconsciously, an international question. When all was said and done Neil was one of my countrymen, and I could never quite get it out of my head that knowing himself as well as he did his mere enlistment was an act of heroism quite comparable to those deeds of valor for which other men receive medals and are mentioned in dispatches. Moreover, the longer I knew him the more I felt myself sympathizing with him because of his weakness, in the same way, I suppose, as a mother often loves her afflicted child the best.

I think that he roused a somewhat similar instinct in Rose-Marie's young heart, for though I sometimes caught her regarding him with that sad look of contemplation with which she had grown to regard so many things of the world, it didn't require any particular astuteness to notice how often they were together, and that no matter where Neil's work might take him Rose-Marie was seldom far away.

We hadn't been at Neufchâtel long when the chaplain began to get up a performance of Pinafore—being an earnest young man who had paid off a considerable part of the church debt back home by amateur performances. As you have probably guessed, Neil had a tenor voice, and as you can probably guess again, he was immediately and definitely cast as Josephine, the captain's beautiful daughter. I believe it's the same in nearly all army plays—the principal interest is roused by the way the boys get themselves up as young ladies, and Neil at once laid himself out—if I may use a vigorous phrase—to knock them all cold. Here, at last, was something in which he excelled, and I can see him now sitting near the window of my office that cold foggy day industriously sewing, while Rose-Marie sat close by, writing at times

in a blank book that she had in her lap, and at other times watching Neil with grave attention.

"What are you writing, Rose-Marie?" I heard him ask her.

"It is my diary," she told him, bending her head over to hide it, so that she looked more than ever like a child.

"Read me what you have written to-day."

"You may laugh," she said, bending over it still farther.

"No, dear; I promise you not to laugh."

I imagined, somehow, that the girls at the Fifth Avenue shop called him "Dear," and that sometimes he used the expression himself without thinking, but when he said the words to Rose-Marie—"*Non, ma chère*"—I could see a deep look come into her eyes, and I fancied, though I may have been mistaken, that her lips trembled a little too.

"*Eh bien,*" she said. "I will read what I have written for to-day."

Fortunately for my sense of curiosity she read slowly, and though they didn't know that I was listening I found myself able to follow it, every word.

"Another week is finished. Another month draws to a close. Outside the fog is lifting and the little children and the birds are happy. But me, I am fatigued, I am sad, and also I am old.

"Outside the little children and the birds make a great deal of noise. They have not the cold blood like me. They are young, happy, full of the joy of living. As for me, I am old and deplorable—*moi, je suis vieille et déplorable.* Nothing that the world can offer will surprise me any more.

"I have seen all there is to see. I have suffered all there is to suffer. I wish that I could be a little girl again with my mother and father and my two pretty sisters. I wish this war had never, never been.

"I am watching my friend sew himself a grand dress, and though I like to watch him I find in this also something that makes me sigh. It seems to me that I sigh

always—that perhaps I was born with a sigh at my heart and can never be joyous again.

"*Eh bien,* take courage. Happier days may yet arrive. Meanwhile, let us write no more. Instead I will watch my friend sew his dress for a time, and then I will go to the baker's."

After she had finished there was silence for a while.

"Why do you sigh, Rose-Marie," asked Neil at last, "at seeing me make a grand dress?"

"I don't know," she helplessly replied; and perhaps because one question begets another she presently asked him: "And you—why have you tears in your eyes as you make your grand dress?"

To which I expected another helpless "I don't know," and was glad to hear Neil answer instead: "I think they came when you said you were old and deplorable."

"But when there are so many poor girls in France like me," she persisted, "why should you weep for me alone?"

"I think," he replied with that simplicity which is born only in the heart, "it is because I love you."

At that Rose-Marie rose slowly to her feet.

"There," she said, "it is your own fault. I have to leave you."

"Leave me; why?" demanded Neil, throwing his sewing down like a man.

"Because I made my promise to Aunt Celeste that if ever you speak to me of love or if ever you touch me I am to leave you at once and go up-stairs and say my prayers before my little *prie-dieu.*"

She slowly approached him on her way to the door, and when she reached his chair she stopped.

"*Au vrai,*" she said, "I promised you shall not touch me, but I did not promise that I would never touch you." She lightly laid her hand upon his shoulder, and though I could swear that she meant to do no more than to bid him a smiling "*Au revoir, mon ami!*" they chanced to start looking into each other's eyes. What they both saw there I cannot tell you—what Neil asked by his glance and what Rose-Marie answered him—but suddenly she

lowered her head, Neil's lips gently touched her cheek, and the next moment she was gone.

IV

As long as I live I shall never forget that afternoon. In the first place it was to be our last day at the château. A hospital had been built south of the town and most of our effects had already been moved. In the second place the chaplain had suggested that we hold a dress rehearsal of Pinafore in one of the large rooms left vacant by the removal of the cots—a plan to which Rose-Marie had given bright-eyed approval. So as soon as she left us Neil began putting on the costume that he had made, but it didn't need a Sherlock Holmes to see that his heart wasn't in it. Once, indeed, he kicked a part of his raiment across the room and wickedly muttered "Damn!"

"What's the matter, boy?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm sick of everything, doctor!" he said. "I know it's terrible for me to talk this way, but I can't always have the disposition of an angel. I want to do something! I want to be somebody! The idea—dressing up like a girl when I ought to be out there fighting! It seems to me that everything in my life, somehow, has turned out just that way.

"When I enlisted, honestly, I thought I would be an officer soon—a general or something like that—and when the war was over I imagined myself, wounded and lame, marching up Fifth Avenue at the head of my men, and little girls throwing roses and everybody cheering and crying together. But now—well, you can see for yourself how everything's going—just at the very time ——"

He pulled himself short, for some of the other boys had arrived with their costumes under their arms. The chaplain was cast as Little Buttercup. A second lieutenant whose name I never caught was Captain Corcoran. A corporal with a subcellar bass was slated as Admiral Porter. But though they were all proud of their make-ups there was no dissenting voice to the verdict that Neil Leighton, as the beautiful Josephine, had everybody else skinned a mile.

"Some pippin, kid, believe me!" said the corporal with the subcellar voice, and under their praise I was glad to see that Neil's mood was brightening.

"They're going to move the piano in first," I whispered to him. "You run up-stairs for a minute and give the ladies a treat."

Nothing loath he made for the stairs, and this is how Aunt Celeste told me about it later in her deep voice:

"I had just sent Rose-Marie to the baker when all of a sudden I hear a rap-rap-rap upon my door. 'Enter!' I cry and how I stare, for never in all my life have I seen such a beautiful lady as this yo'ng man of yours—what you call him?—Leetle Nell! At first—*mon Dieu!*—I cannot believe it possible, and it isn't ontil he show me—with, oh, such delicate care!—the bottoms of his pantaloons rolled up and out of sight—it isn't till then that I fall in my chair, and throw up my hands and laugh myself seeck till I cry.

"M'sieur, it isn't his dress so much as his manner, nor his manner so much as his pretty face, and over all of this he has a charm—what you call the fatal gift of fascination, is it not?—especially when he p'tend to flirt with me, making the sheep's glances and turning away to geegle in his muff when I lower my voice and make response to his gallant advances. He has a hat, contrived to cover his head and hide the short hairs, and over his face he wears a dotted veil through which he nearly breaks my heart with the coyness of his eye."

Meanwhile we down-stairs were busy with the piano, rolling it through the hall to the room where we wanted it, and I had just gone back to get the stool when the storm broke. There was one tremendous roar, a splintering crash, and the next moment the place where the piano had been was nothing but a torn and twisted hole in the floor—the piano no more to be found and identified than the happy boys who had been rolling it along the hall a moment before.

"They must have thought we were using this place as a hospital yet," I remember thinking, and then to my surprise I discovered that I was in a heap in a corner of the

hall, every rib in my body feeling as though it were broken, and a gash in my wrist.

I was trying to make a tourniquet for this when I seemed to see the frightened face of Aunt Celeste. The next thing I knew I was in her room up-stairs and Neil was at the window staring through the lifting fog for Rose-Marie—staring and looking more than ever like a girl—a pale girl who trembled, and whose pallor and trembling both seemed as natural as the costume he wore.

For half an hour one might have thought that every gun in the German Army was trained upon Neufchâtel. Twice more the château was struck, the second shell bringing down the whole main body of the building and leaving little more than the south wing, where we were, the third wrecking one of the rooms next to ours and making a funnel-shaped hole in the floor. At last the bombardment stopped, and this time it was Aunt Celeste who went to the window to see if she could see any signs of Rose-Marie.

Suddenly she dropped the curtain as though it burned her fingers and I heard her gasp to Neil: "*Mon Dieu!* The Germans—they must have come in the mist! There was one big devil in the road who saw me at the window—and he waved his hand and laughed at me—and started for the door——"

This time I think it was I who fainted, because for a time I remembered no more.

"Ah, m'sieur," Aunt Celeste told me later, "it is in hours like that when we live a lifetime in a minute. Together we carry you into the leetle dressing-room next door, and I run for the revolver that I keep in my drawer. But my hand it shakes like a leaf in the wind, and I seem to have no strength to resist when Leetle Nell he takes the revolver from me and hides it in his muff. 'Leesten,' he whisper', his voice shaking like my poor hand, 'he will think it was me at the window. You go and wait for Rose-Marie, for when she comes back she will need you.'

"Even then I do not think he had a plan. But me, I begin to see a light, and I join you in the wardrobe, and fasten my eye to the filigree cross in the door.

"I had hardly set myself when a beeg blond boche appears. Leetle Nell was standing by the table—pale, with a beauty like a broken rose—and looking, ah, so helpless and so sad!

"There was no talk, m'sieur, between those two. It all transpire' in pantomime. As soon as the soldier perceives her he place' his rifle in a corner with the manner of man who says: 'Ah, heaven, what luck is mine, and how appropriate' you have reward' a German soldier!' It was with a terrible laugh that he approach' her, *mon ami,* and it was with the same terrible laugh that he died—the hand in the muff so close to his heart that the bullet could not miss.

"It is then that I reappear and help to carry him in the next room. One leetle push and he slides down the broken floor, and through the hole to the cellar so far below.

"'That is one,' says Leetle Nell to me in a voice that does not tremble quite so much; and catching his meaning I look at him and marvel that whereas many a girl in France to-day must be a man before she can be a woman, here was a boy who must be a woman before he can be a man.

"I was still thinking of this when another feetstep sounds on the stair, and I had hardly hid myself when the door opens and in comes another so beautiful boche. He had, I thought, an air of suspicion, as though he came on the search for an absent friend, but when he sees the helpless figure of Leetle Nell trying to hide behind the door he, too, laid down his rifle, and almost as quick as I can tell it he, too, was in the cellar, comparing notes, if the dead commune, with his absent friend below.

"'That is two!' says Leetle Nell. This time his voice doesn't tremble at all, and I think to myself: '*Eh bon!* If his beauty holds out and the cartridge' continue old Kaiser Bill will wake up soon and find he has lost his army!'"

All this time, it seems, heavy fighting had been going on in the streets, which were now quite clear of fog; but the Germans had the two advantages of surprise and

numbers. As a result they steadily won their way to the south of the town, and the streets round us grew comparatively quiet. The next thing I remember, Aunt Celeste and Neil were anxiously talking of Rose-Marie.

"She just about had time to get to the baker's," Aunt Celeste was saying, "and Madame Boulager—I know her well—would hide her in the cellar. Now that the street is empty again I will run along and see ——"

A pause followed and I guessed that Neil was cautiously looking through the window.

"There's an officer standing on the steps of the church," he said; "and just inside I think I see a soldier. If we could get them away from there you might have a chance, but not as it is."

And after another pause I heard him say: "If we could only get that officer away from there!"

In the ensuing silence I heard the curtain rings moving, and when a minute later Aunt Celeste excitedly whispered: "There! He has seen you! He looked right at you then!" it wasn't hard to guess what was in the wind.

Often lately I have thought of that German officer and how surely he held his fate in his own two hands.

"Ah, flûte!" muttered Aunt Celeste, who was evidently peeping through the curtain. "He still stands there on the steps of the church, and now he lights a cigarette and frowns at the match. *Ah, flûte,* he will not come. He thinks, perhaps, of a wife of his own at home—and daughters, too, of the age of our little Rose-Marie. *Eh bien,* I do not condemn him for that."

Yes, surely if ever a man held his fate in his own two hands it was that frowning officer, the subject of a grim and epic justice. A text of antiquity came to my mind: "None but a man's own self can destroy him," and in that, at least it seemed to me, the German officer on the steps of the church might be said to typify the whole nation for which he stood.

"Aha!" suddenly whispered Aunt Celeste. *"Voyez!* At last! At last he comes across the street!"

For the third time she hid herself in the dressing-room

where I was concealed and placed her eye to the cut-out cross in the door.

"Ah, m'sieur," she told me later, "the officer and his men—there was nothing to choose between them in the bottom of their hearts, and when the muff is pressed against his side he drops to the floor, and this is the paper that falls from his cap and lies at our feet."

It was a typewritten order from the General Staff—a good example of German attention to detail—and also, characteristically enough, it was headed "Confidential." It is too long to quote in full, but later I copied a translation of the following paragraph:

"Upon entering Neufchâtel, therefore, you will immediately seize each belfry that is not destroyed. Place a trustworthy man in charge of each, with orders to ring the bell in peals of three for at least five minutes if he hears the other bells ringing in similar manner. Should the enemy seriously threaten to cut off your rear you will be advised. In that event you will start the bells ringing as above; on hearing which your officers will at once withdraw their men from Neufchâtel and fall back with all speed across the Aisne."

"Ah, yes, m'sieur," continued Aunt Celeste, "and at first when I read it I mourned, '*Helas!* We have killed the bird which lays the golden egg, for there is no one now to give the order to ring the bells for the grand retreat.' But Leetle Nell he looks at me, and I tremble too when I see the inspiration that of a sudden comes into his eye.

"'*Grâce à Dieu!*' he cried. 'It is I who will start the bells!' And almost before I know it he is down the stairs, his hand in his muff, and he disappear' in the church across the street.

"I had not long to wait, m'sieur. In less than a minute the Bell of Saint Surplice ring' out 'Tong, tong, tong!' With a sob and a catch in its throat, so eager and mournful it rings. At first I am in torment that the others will not join, but soon the bell of Notre Dame swings on her higher note, 'Tong, tong, tong!' And then I hear Saint Marie's, deeper than either! And then Saint Peter and

Paul, which is flat, with a crack! Then all along the streets I begin to see the Germans hurrying back the way they had come, with our brave soldiers still worrying away at them, though more than ever outnumbered, and making me think of a big mad bull rushing back to his field with a brave leetle terrier fighting and nipping him on.

"And that was how it happen'. In half an hour there was not one living boche in all the town, onless a prisoner, and when I run to the baker's to see if Rose-Marie was safe I found her coming home with Leetle Nell, who was dress' at last in a soldier's coat that he had found from somewhere; and the way those two they look at each other—God knows, m'sieur, I was glad to see it so.

"That night our reserves arrived, but the wonder on every man's tongue was why the Germans had given up the town when once they had it safe. So early next morning I thought to myself: '*Eh bien,* at least it will please Rose-Marie if he has a medal,' and I went and told them who it was who had won such a victory for France the day before. In half an hour they sent for Leetle Nell and—well, you shall see for yourself what they did it to him!"

It was in the new hospital that Aunt Celeste had been telling me this, and though I couldn't turn my head I saw her nod to some one at the other end of the room. A moment later Rose-Marie walked round my cot—a gracious little figure, no longer old and deplorable, but radiant with tender pride and happiness—and behind her who should come but my friend Little Nell!

It needed only one glance to see how he was changed—one glance to see that never again should we call him Little Nell. He was dressed in the uniform of a second lieutenant, with a row of medals across his chest that any man in France that day might well have envied. But it wasn't those things that I liked to see so much as it was the way he held himself, and the calm confidence of his glance as he seated himself on the side of my cot and lightly placed his hand on mine.

"Well, old boy"—he smiled, his other hand in

Rose-Marie's—" we're only waiting for you to get better."

" I promise you I shan't be long," I reassured them.

Over his shoulder I noted with satisfaction the respect with which the others were watching him, and then I saw for the first time that in the sleeve of his coat was a discolored bandage winding up his arm.

" Hello," I said. " How did you get that? "

" Oh, that's nothing," he replied. " When I ran into the church to ring that bell—well, there were three Germans there instead of one, and the last one certainly tried his best to stop me. . . . Perhaps now I'm here, though, I might as well have it dressed."

Though I couldn't turn my body, at least I could use my hands, and after he had removed his coat I started to unwind the bandage. I hadn't unwound many turns when it began to stick, and remembering what had happened in Doctor Diderot's chair I stopped and looked at him.

" Oh, that's all right," he said. " Give it a pull! " And lowering his voice so that none but me could hear it, he added in a tone of smiling reproach: " You don't want Rose-Marie to think I'm a sissy, do you? "

APPENDIX

THOMAS BEER

Thomas Beer (born, Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1889) completed his education at Yale and Columbia Universities. He enlisted in the Army, in 1917, and for a time served as a private in a regiment of Field Artillery. Later he won his promotion to First Lieutenant. He has always had a predilection for writing; and his war stories may be regarded as first-hand impressions of the man in the ranks. His first story under his own name, "The Brothers," was published in *The Century*, in 1917.

ALDEN BROOKS

Alden Brooks (born, Cleveland, Ohio, in 1883) spent the years of his early childhood in France and England. He returned to America to school, graduating from Harvard in 1905, but after his marriage went again to France. He hoped in the seclusion of some French village to find the peace and quiet essential to his wife's painting and his own writing; but the advent of war upset his plans. He became in turn an ambulance driver, a war correspondent, and a Lieutenant in the French Army. Born of these experiences is his book of stories, "The Fighting Men."

DANA BURNET

Dana Burnet (born, Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1888) graduated from high school in 1907, and from the College of Law, University of Cornell, in 1911. He was a reporter on the New York *Evening Sun* from 1911 to 1913; an editor from 1913 to 1915, and has been a special writer

since that time. He is a frequent contributor of stories, poems, and essays to various magazines, and has published several books. Mr. Burnet is a keen observer, with a fund of sympathy and humor, which hold the interest of the reader.

"DONN BYRNE"

Bryan Oswald Donn-Byrne (born, New York, in 1888) was educated abroad, receiving a degree at the University College, Dublin, in 1909. He took post-graduate work in English, in Paris and Leipzig, returning to New York in 1911. He has done journalistic work for the New York *Evening Sun* and *Brooklyn Eagle,* and been a frequent contributor of short stories to leading magazines. He is an athlete, an authority on boxing, and interested in sports generally.

JAMES FRANCIS DWYER

James Francis Dwyer (born, Camden, N. S. W. Australia, 1874) received his education in the common schools and the broader school of the world. He has traveled extensively in Australia, the South Seas, and Africa. In 1906 he reached England and, a year later, came to America, where he has done the bulk of his literary work. He is the author of the following: "The White Waterfall," "The Bust of Lincoln," "The Spotted Panther," and "Breath of the Jungle."

GILBERT EMERY

As the author of "Squads Right" wishes to keep his real name a secret, we can only say that he served with distinction as an officer in the United States Army in France. His story reveals the fact that he has been not only a close observer but an excellent interpreter of army life.

EDNA FERBER

Edna Ferber (born, Kalamazoo, Mich., in 1887) was educated in the schools of Appleton, Wisconsin. She

began her literary work as a reporter on the Appleton *Daily Crescent,* when she was seventeen years old, continuing with the Milwaukee *Journal* and Chicago *Tribune.* With this as a foundation, she began her magazine work in 1910. Her first story, published in *Everybody's,* "The Homely Heroine," won ready favor, as have many succeeding ones dealing with the joys and sorrows of mercantile life.

Some of her best known stories are: "Dawn O'Hara," "Buttered Side Down," "Roast Beef Medium," "Personality Plus," "Emma McChesney & Company," and "Fanny Herself." Her writing is marked by a vein of quiet humor and hard common-sense.

MARY MITCHELL FREEDLY

Mary Mitchell Freedly (born, Philadelphia, in 1894) is a granddaughter of A. Weir Mitchell, physician and author. She has specialized in sociology, and made a personal study of conditions surrounding the working-girl. For a time she was manager of the Philadelphia Trades School for Girls. She is not a voluminous writer, but her work is marked by sympathy and power of analysis.

MARGARITA SPALDING GERRY

Margarita Spalding Gerry (born, Washington, D. C., in 1870) is a Wellesley graduate, who taught literature in the Washington high schools for several years. Her husband was a man of fine literary instinct, and it was at his suggestion that she began to write. Her first magazine story was a sketch of college life published in *Ainslee's.* Since her husband's death in 1908, writing has been her profession instead of her pastime. Her best known story is probably "The Toy Shop," which won her instant recognition.

DONAL HAMILTON HAINES

Donal Hamilton Haines (born, Kalamazoo, Mich., in

1887) was graduated in 1909 from the University of Michigan. His literary career began in his high school days, when he became editor of the school paper. In college he became connected with *The Inlander* and *The Michigan Daily.* He engaged in writing for magazines after graduation, and has continued ever since. He has made a close study of the War and his fiction has naturally taken this direction. He has had this interest since boyhood, and now owns a collection of lead soldiers which, he does not believe, can be duplicated. It consists of 1,100 soldiers, representing thirty-two nations, all correctly uniformed. "Bill" was written from personal experiences at one of the big training camps, and shows "the real thing."

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

Gouverneur Morris (born, New York, in 1876) bears a distinguished name. He is a direct descendant of Gouverneur Morris the Revolutionary patriot. The present Morris obtained his higher education at Yale, whence he graduated in 1898. He early won his spurs in the short story field, and his name is now well known among magazine writers. His books include: "The Penalty," "A Bunch of Grapes," and "We Three."

WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

William Hamilton Osborne (born, Newark, N. J., in 1873) early turned his attention to law, and graduated *cum laude* at the New York Law School. He has been a lawyer in active practice in the states of New Jersey and New York; but has been also a prolific writer of short stories. During the last fifteen years he has had representation in practically all the popular magazines in the country, over five hundred of his stories being published. He is also the author of five novels: "The Red Mouse," "The Running Fight," "The Catspaw," "The Blue Buckle," and "The Boomerang." His stories deal with law, business, politics, crime, and mystery. He is a striking example of the accidental author, never having

written a line of fiction until he was nearly thirty years of age.

WILL PAYNE

Will Payne (born, Whiteside County, Ill., in 1865) received a common school education, between intervals of farm work. For ten years he lived in central Nebraska, then came to Chicago, in 1890, where, as he says, he launched himself, with a good deal of difficulty, in the newspaper world. He wrote first for *The Daily News;* then became financial editor of *The Chronicle* and *The Economist.* He finally won recognition in short stories, and has contributed to many magazines. His first book, "Jerry the Dreamer" (1896), has been followed by "The Money Captain," and others.

LAURA SPENCER PORTER

Laura Spencer Porter (Mrs. Pope) is well known as an essayist and short story writer. Her stories which have attracted most attention are: "The Wished-for Child," and "Spendthrifts," published in *The Atlantic;* "The Idealist," "Mixed Marriage," and "The Boy's Mother," published in *Harper's.* Important essays from her pen in *The Atlantic* are: "My French School Days," "Guests," and "Birthdays and Other Egotisms." Mrs. Pope is the author of several volumes of essays and stories, which are marked by individuality and distinction.

GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM

George Palmer Putnam (born, Rye, N. Y., in 1887) is a member of the family which for three generations has been connected with the publishing house of G. P. Putnam's Sons. He commenced his higher education in Harvard, and completed it at the University of California. For the last ten years he has been intermittently a resident of Oregon, where he has been active in political affairs. He has also edited the Bend *Bulletin.* Mr. Putnam has been something of a world wanderer, and has written many newspaper and magazine articles concern-

ing his travels. He is also the author of the following books: "The Southland of North America," "In the Oregon Country," and "The Smiting of the Rock."

FRANCIS W. SULLIVAN

Francis W. Sullivan (born, Evanston, Ill., 1887) was graduated from Lafayette College in 1908, with the degree of Ph.B. The next year he spent in graduate study at Columbia University, obtaining his M. A. in 1909. He engaged in newspaper work in New York, writing for *The Mail* and *The Evening Sun;* besides contributing verses and short stories to *The Century, Metropolitan, Ladies' Home Journal, Munsey's* and other magazines. He is author of the following novels: "Children of Banishment," "Alloy of Gold," and "Star of the North."

ROBERT W. SNEDDON

Robert W. Sneddon (born, Ayrshire, Scotland, in 1880) has received a cosmopolitan training. After studying Arts and Law at Glasgow and living in Edinburgh, London and Paris, he came to New York in 1909 to do free lance work. His first contribution appeared in *Judge,* and he wrote humorous skits for three years. His first short story, "Little Golden Shoes," was printed in *The Forum* in 1812. Mr. Sneddon writes directly and spontaneously, without corrections. He is not strong on plots, relying chiefly on the clearness and strength of his characterizations. His style is simple, unstudied, and natural.

BOOTH TARKINGTON

Newton Booth Tarkington (born, Indianapolis, in 1869) has become one of the foremost figures of contemporary American letters. His education was obtained at Phillips Exeter Academy, Purdue University, and Princeton (1893). The latter university has since conferred upon him the honorary degrees of A. M. and Litt. D. Mr. Tarkington lived abroad from 1903 to

1910, and the old-world flavor crept into some of his first literary successes, notably "Monsieur Beaucaire." "The Gentleman from Indiana" (1899) and the successful play, "The Man from Home," also laid the foundations of his later reputation. He has written plays, novels, and short stories, turning from one medium to another with facility. In "Penrod," and "Seventeen" he has shown keen insight into the psychology of boyhood and budding youth.

GEORGE WESTON

George Weston (born, New York, in 1880) received a high school education and afterwards studied law. Turning from this profession, he became interested in engineering, and founded The Western Engineering Company. In 1900 he joined the staff of *The Evening Sun,* New York, but it was not until ten years later that he published his first short story, perhaps fittingly entitled, "After Many Years" (*Harper's*). He has since contributed stories to various magazines. He is fond of country life, and is an enthusiastic farmer, sportsman, and motorist.